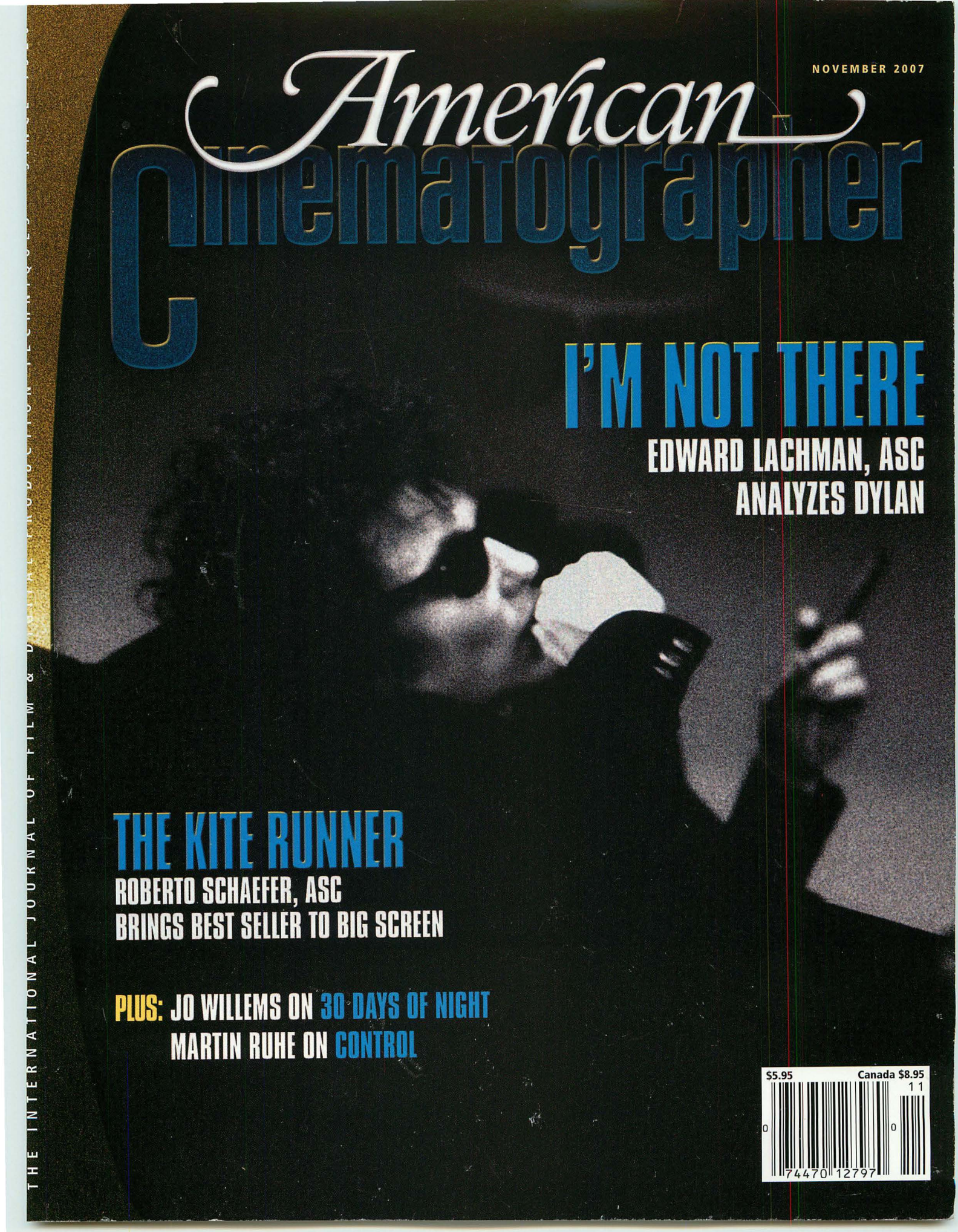
NOVEMBER 2007

American Cinematographer

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF FILM & DIGITAL IMAGING TECHNIQUES



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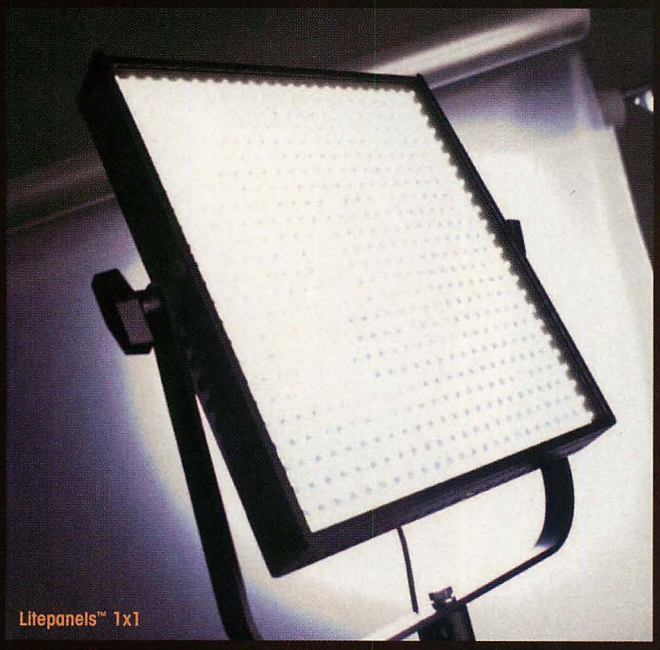
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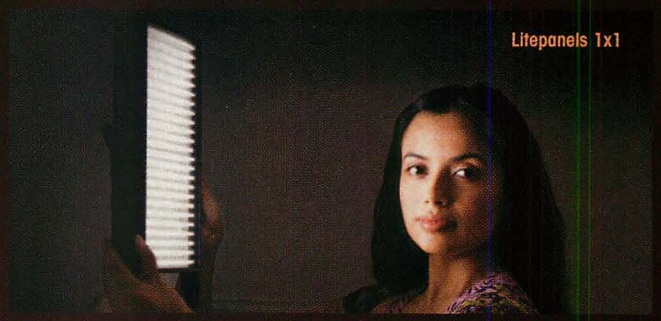
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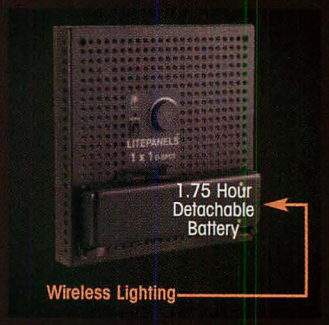
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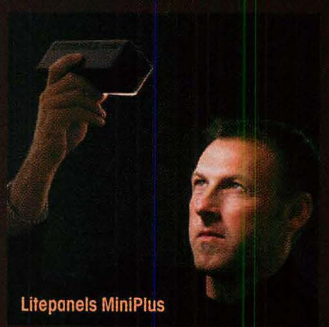


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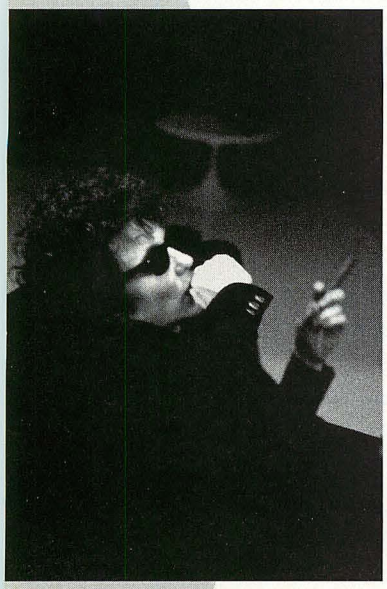
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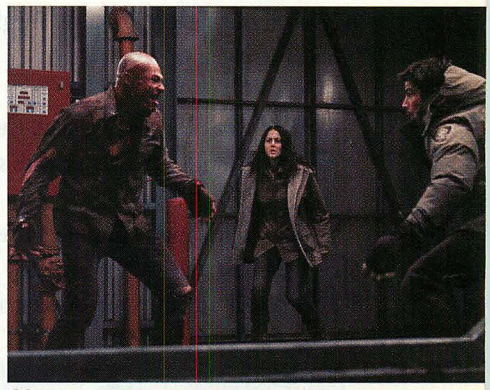
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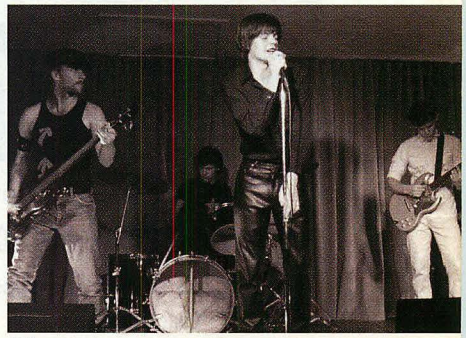
On Our Cover: Provocative rock star Jude (Cate Blanchett) represents one aspect of Bob Dylan's iconic persona in *I'm Not There*, an unconventional biopic shot by Edward Lachman, ASC. (Photo by Jonathan Wenk, courtesy of The Weinstein Co.)



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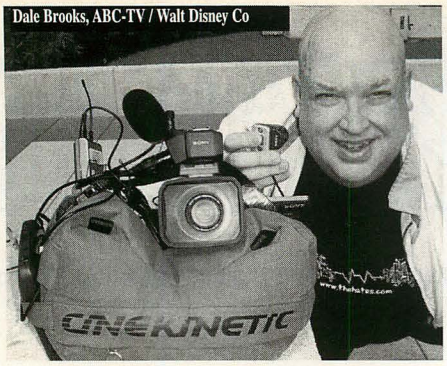


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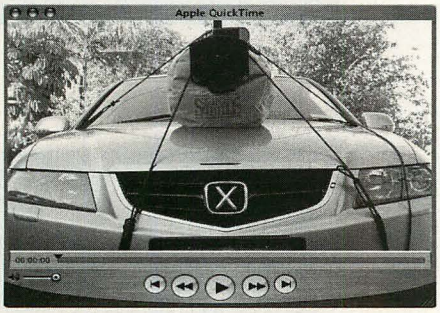
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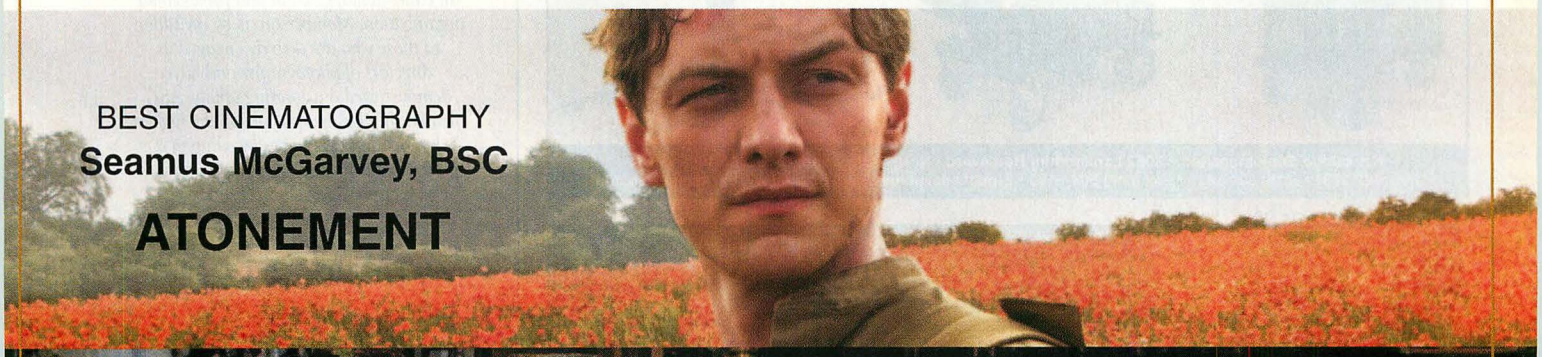
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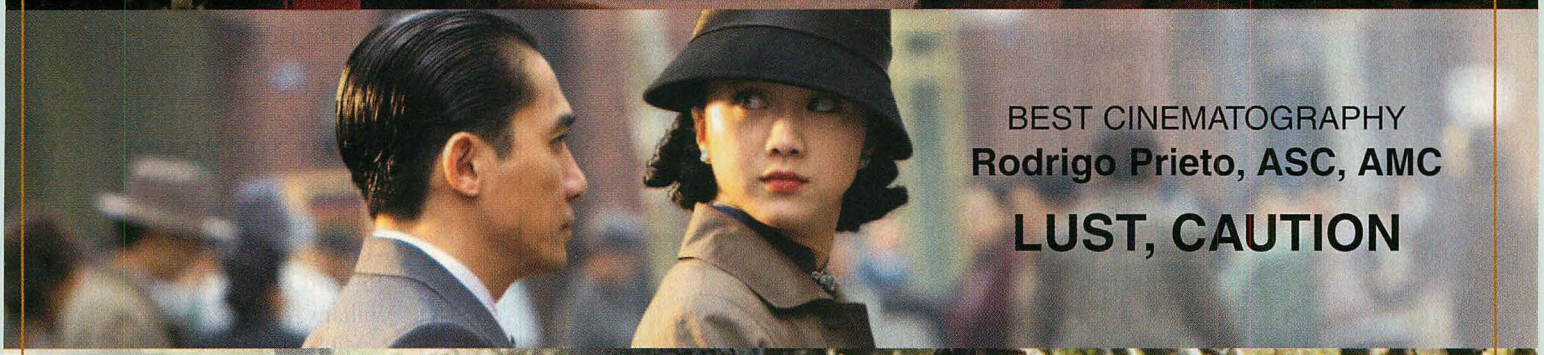
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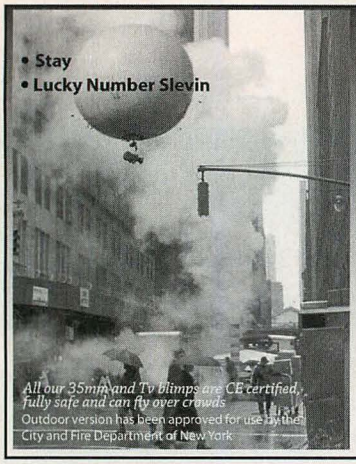
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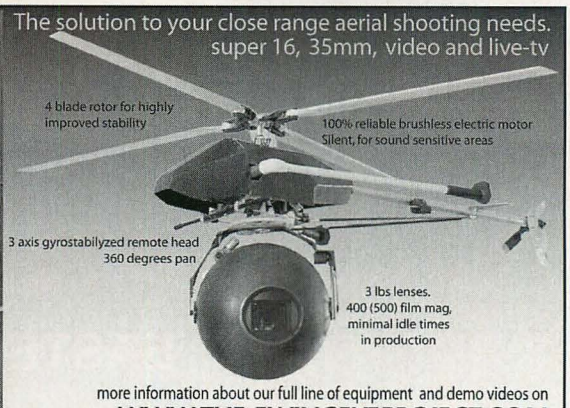
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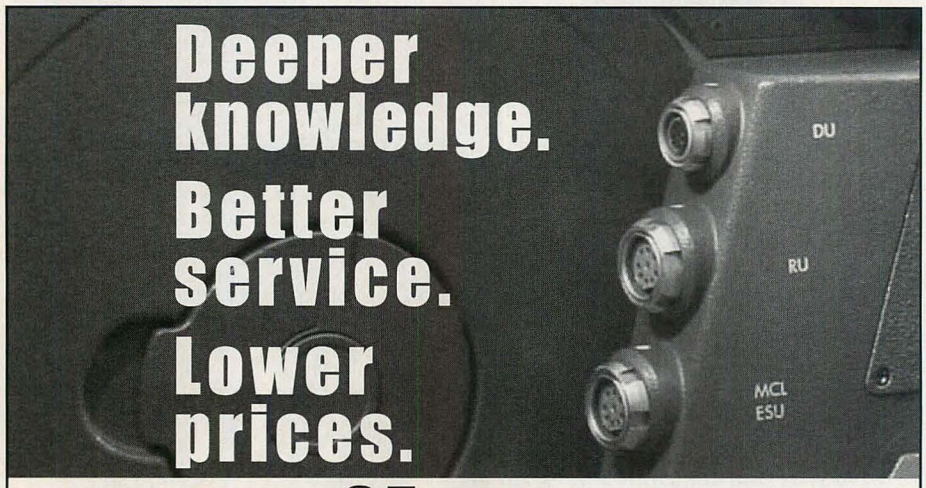
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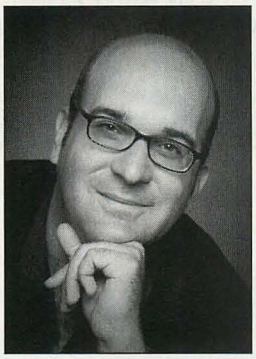
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Editor's Note



Bob Dylan's chameleonic career has made him an enduring icon of the musical pantheon. The enigmatic, elusive troubadour has fascinated — and occasionally infuriated — fans and journalists for more than four decades. Along the way, he has built a legacy that presents a daunting gauntlet to anyone attempting a biographical portrait. (Martin Scorsese needed 3½ hours just to cover the man's formative years in the PBS documentary *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*.)

Director Todd Haynes takes a different, decidedly unique tack in *I'm Not There*, a prismatic look at facets of Dylan's persona. Abetted by Ed Lachman, ASC (and six actors portraying Dylan), Haynes captures the essence of a figure who has famously thwarted easy assessments of his character. The result is a visually compelling, nonlinear experience that will enthrall some viewers and quite possibly confound others. (It helps to enter the theater with a working knowledge of the Dylan mythos and a taste for experimental cinema.)

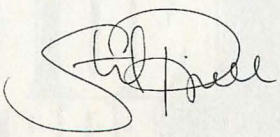
Without question, the film represents a high-water mark for Lachman, who has previously demonstrated his skill in indie classics that include *Desperately Seeking Susan, Mississippi Masala, The Limey, The Virgin Suicides* and Haynes' *Far From Heaven*. In serving Dylan's mutable feast, Lachman crafts a variety of striking looks in color and black-and-white that reflect a delirious blend of visual influences: Fellini, the French New Wave, and Westerns of the 1970s. The cinematographer "brings it all back home" in a detailed interview with Jon Silberg ("Deconstructing Bob Dylan," page 38).

Some rock stars never survive the chaos of fame, a point poignantly made in director Anton Corbijn's artful, emotionally devastating *Control*. Shot in brooding black-and-white by Martin Ruhe, the film tracks the rise and fall of Ian Curtis, lead singer of the influential British band Joy Division. Ruhe discusses the filmmakers' meticulous, authenticity-driven approach to the project with Bob Davis ("Losing *Control*," page 74).

Emotions also fly in *The Kite Runner*, an adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's best-selling novel that director Marc Forster describes as "an intimate epic." Forster and long-time collaborator Roberto Schaefer, ASC based their approach partly on Sergio Leone's widescreen Western *Once Upon a Time in the West*. Schaefer explains their strategy to New York correspondent Pat Thomson ("Honoring a Lost Friend," page 52).

If you'd prefer to abandon subtler emotions for sheer terror, the vampire chiller *30 Days of Night* is just the ticket. The movie's intriguing concept allows fanged fiends to run amok in a remote Alaskan town that sees no sun for one month each year. Cinematographer Jo Willems and director David Slade, who previously teamed on the Sundance shocker *Hard Candy*, explain the show's logistics to Australian scribe Simon Gray ("Night Terrors," page 62).

Topping off this issue is a pictorial salute to this year's Emmy-nominated cinematographers ("TV's Top-Rated," page 82), who have created vivid images that can be enjoyed in the comfort of your own home.



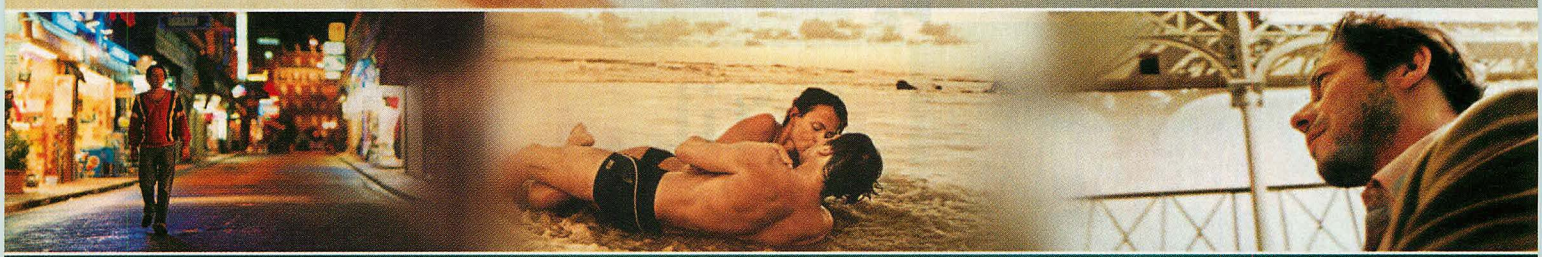
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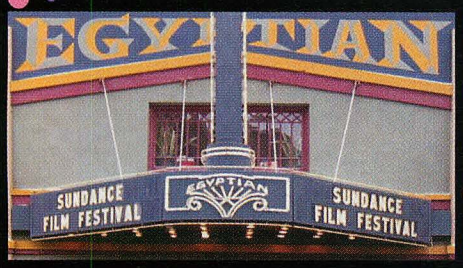
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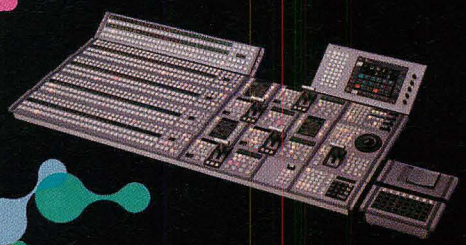
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Global Village

Sleuth Revisits a Battle of British Wits

by Mark Hope-Jones



In a scene from *Sleuth*, which is set entirely in a very modern house in the English countryside, Milo Tindle (Jude Law) temporarily gains the upper hand in his battle with his lover's husband, Andrew.

Director Kenneth Branagh is no stranger to screenplays of genuine artistic pedigree, having brought to the screen works by Shakespeare, Chekhov, Shelley and Mozart. His latest effort, *Sleuth*, filmed at Twickenham Studios in England, is no exception. Anthony Shaffer's Tony Award-winning play was a hit in 1970, as was the 1972 Joseph L. Mankiewicz film version, scripted by Shaffer himself. Branagh's take on this dark tale of male rivalry and psychological gamesmanship has been adapted by Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter, further enriching its literary heritage.

The film, then, is adapted from a play by a playwright and directed by an actor who found fame on the stage. From the outset, however, cinematographer Haris Zambarloukos, BSC felt no apprehension about the material's cinematic potential: "Ken is definitely not the kind of director who stages a camera theatrically. He's renowned for elaborate Steadicam and crane shots and single takes that are really intriguing and very cinematic, so I never thought for a minute that he would turn it into something stagy or theatrical."

Mankiewicz's film starred Michael Caine as the young Milo Tindle, pitting his wits against Laurence Olivier's Andrew Wyke, a moneyed older gentleman whose boyish sense of play veils a bitter resentment of Tindle's affair with his wife. In Branagh's version, Caine reprises Olivier's role, while Jude Law plays the part made famous by Caine. Pinter's script contemporizes Wyke by relocating him from a stately home full of antiquities to a modern, minimalist living space with automated features — including a versatile lighting scheme, all controlled by a PDA. Zambarloukos explains, "I was interested in using moving lights — Mac 2000s and all the stuff you

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Milo and Andrew (Michael Caine) face off in the master bedroom.

would normally have in an exhibition or club. I was also interested in a kind of architectural lighting that is only achievable by using LEDs." He gathered all the LED lights he could find that would register on film and tested them, eventually deciding on RGB units from Color Kinetics, though they were so new that they had to be purchased rather than rented. Production designer Tim Harvey found ways to hide the lights in alcoves on the set, just as they would be hidden in a real building.

The RGB LEDs were controlled from a DMX dimmer board and could generate four million different colors, allowing dramatic background changes in shot. These changes were matched to Caine's actions with the PDA, giving the impression that Wyke manipulates his environment as part of his constant power play. "Actually, even though we had four million colors to play with, the three I liked best were red, green and blue," says Zambarloukos. The film progresses from a bold blue wash at the beginning to a mix of blue and green for the middle section and then red for the final scene. "One of the things about these LED lights is they're very directional," he continues. "They're meant for lighting up the sides of buildings, so they have something like a three-degree beam. We could change things in the background, but I wanted to be realistic; I didn't want to do a blue film, I wanted a film where a wall could be blue or green but not a face."

For lighting faces, he and gaffer Julian White selected the new VistaBeams from Kino Flo. "I really like the VistaBeams," Zambarloukos enthuses. "They're DMX-mixable and seem to be a powerful fluorescent, almost like a 6K. We needed more than we could get, so used them in combination with Wall-O-Lites and Image 80s." Though he wanted two dimmer boards to separate architectural and film lighting, the budget could accommodate one, which made for some complicated setups when it came to programming moving lights and patterns. "Daniel Lowe, my best boy, doubled up as a desk operator. We were shooting on one set, so it was possible."

Zambarloukos and Branagh agreed that widescreen would be the ideal format, so the cinematographer opted for Panavision Primo anamorphics on Platinum and XL cameras. "It's a standoff film, almost like a Western," he says, "and I believe you can shoot a film inside four walls like a Western, especially when it's about two confrontational characters." He used a wide range of focal lengths, from 35mm to 550mm, but tried to maintain one aperture setting. "I do have favorite lenses, but I really didn't pay any attention to that on this film. I pretty much consistently worked at T4 no matter what; it's just a good stop for anamorphic work. My 1st ACs, Hamish Doyle-Ditmas and Ashley Bond, were so experienced with 'Scope that they allowed us to shoot confidently." All interiors were shot on Kodak Vision2 500T 5218, while the exterior stocks were 50D 5201 and 250D 5205.

Branagh rehearsed the actors in



ROBERTO SCHAEFER, ASC

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

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Above: Andrew brings the game to an end with a desperate plea. Below: Cinematographer Haris Zambarloukos, BSC (center) and director Kenneth Branagh (with finder) line up a shot.

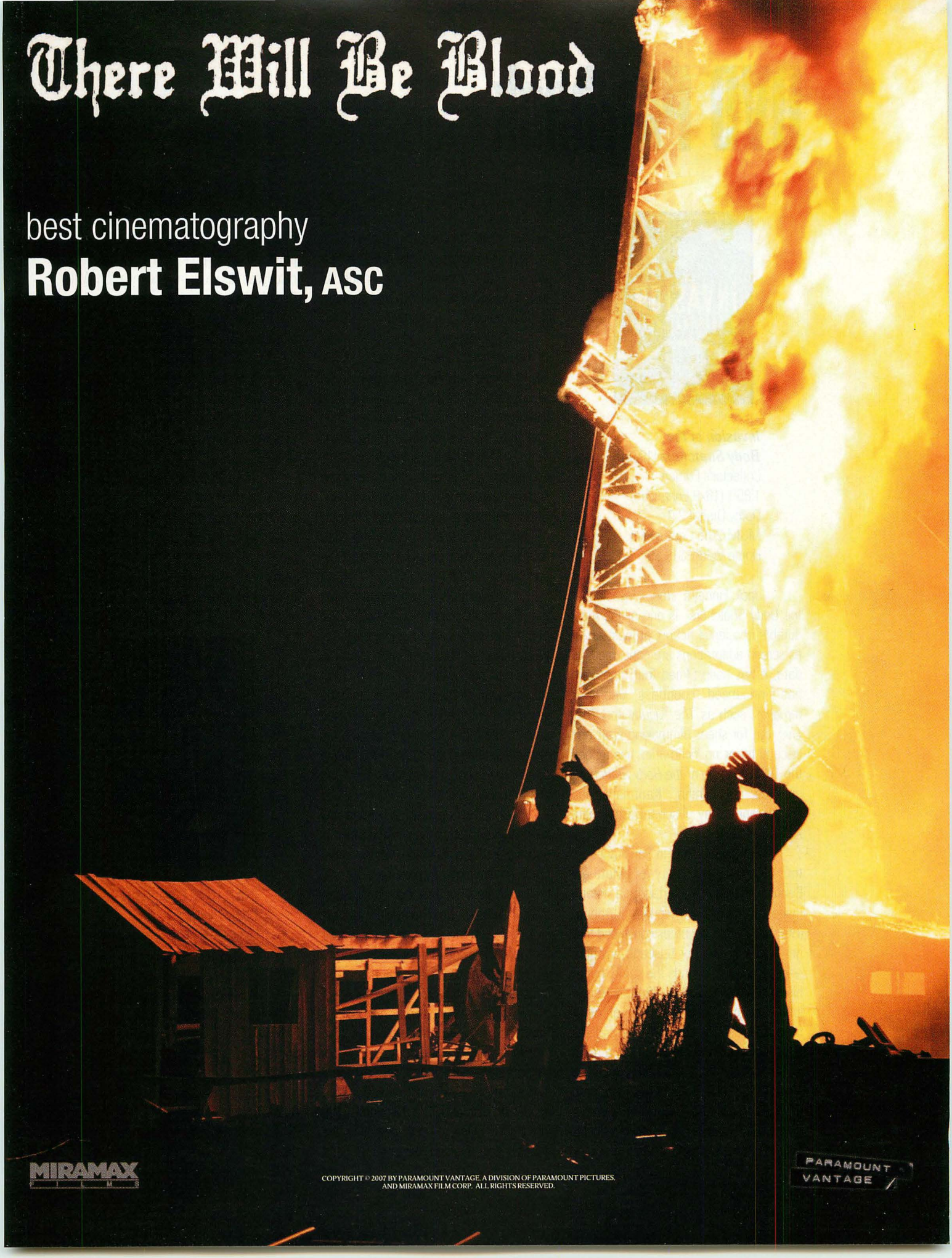
a space marked out exactly as the set would be constructed while Zambarloukos, with operators Simon Baker and Luke Redgrave, worked out every camera position and movement in advance. This method allowed them to maintain a 24-day shooting schedule. "At the end we brought Pinter in to have a look at the rehearsal, and it was one of the best experiences of my life," recalls Zambarloukos. "Ken and I wheeled him around in his wheelchair to the different camera angles we had planned, and we'd basically watch a scene from each position, with Ken yelling 'Action' and 'Cut' like he would on the set."

Many of the camera positions lingered on seemingly innocuous details, such as the characters' hands, in order to heighten the sense of tension and hidden agendas. "We did shots that ran for a minute and a half, and we never tilted up to get a character's face," says Zambarloukos. "It was a really risky thing to do, and we didn't shoot coverage for such things. When you have two actors of this caliber, you realize how much they can actually do with their hands and a glass and some ice. They can sustain something like that for a minute, two minutes; it was fascinating to watch."

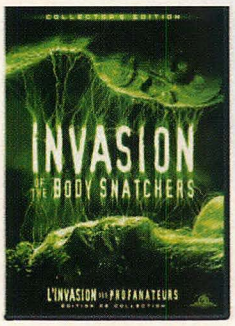
Wyke's home is rife with surveillance cameras, and images from these units play a key role in the story. Zambarloukos obtained an Image Intensifier night-vision attachment from Panavision and mounted it between the 35mm camera and lens; this allowed him to film either at night or during the day with NDs and Polarizers — the only filters he used on the shoot. Although he deliberately approached the film as though it were bound for a traditional postproduction workflow, the film ultimately went through a digital intermediate (DI) at Midnight Transfer in London. Zambarloukos is adamant that with such a route, the conventional IP-IN process is unnecessary: "When you're going DI, you don't need it — you just lose two generations."

Though the show was on a tight schedule that required shooting five or six pages a day, Zambarloukos says the atmosphere on set was jovial, especially when Caine entertained the company with anecdotes about making the earlier *Sleuth*. "He's a great raconteur and very funny," says the cinematographer. "We'd be just about to start a take, and he'd turn around to Jude and say, 'Jude, if you feel yourself going out of focus, just take a little step forward.' Of course, everyone cracks up and you have to reset, but he does it with good humor and makes everyone feel at ease." ■




There Will Be Blood
best cinematography
Robert Elswit, ASC
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DVD Playback



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978)
Collector's Edition
1.85:1 (16x9 Enhanced)
Dolby Digital 2.0
MGM/20th Century Fox Home Video, $19.95

Jack Finney's story "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" is one of the most durable in science fiction, at least as far as screen adaptations are concerned. To date, it has been filmed four times and has influenced countless unofficial remakes, such as *The Faculty* and *They Live*, but for sheer filmmaking craft and visceral terror, no incarnation has topped the 1978 *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, directed by Philip Kaufman and photographed by Michael Chapman, ASC.

Setting the story in San Francisco, the film tells the story of Matthew Bennell (Donald Sutherland), a health inspector whose co-worker, Elizabeth (Brooke Adams), becomes convinced that her husband isn't her husband anymore — he looks and sounds the same, but at his core he is profoundly different. Before long, Matthew and a couple of other friends realize Elizabeth isn't crazy: aliens have landed on Earth and are turning humankind into a race of emotionless "pods" who have no need for love, hate or individuality. The filmmakers use this premise to satirize not only particular cultural movements of the era (especially McCarthyism), but also the tendency people have to conform. The scariest thing about *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* isn't that mankind is in danger of losing its ability to feel, but that so many people welcome the change.

Chapman, who was in the midst of a creative hot streak that included *Taxi Driver*, *Fingers* and *Raging Bull*, employed an unsettling palette of greens and violets to depict a world that has been infected. The juxtaposition of locations with a stylized color scheme perfectly suggests a recognizable urban landscape invaded by something unnatural, and Chapman uses a sophisticated interplay of light and shadow to convey the characters' fears that danger lurks in every dark pocket of the frame.

The result is a suspenseful thriller that also packs an emotional wallop. The filmmakers balance formal compositions with subjective handheld camerawork to subtly manipulate the audience's point of view throughout the film; the fact that the viewer's identification is so complicated adds to the movie's ability to disturb, as every unsettling implication in the film is followed through to its most terrifying possible conclusion.

Chapman's evocative lighting has never looked better than it does in this two-disc collector's edition, whose transfer of the film perfectly preserves not only the vivid colors but also the rich blacks of the picture's palette. The equally impressive Dolby 2.0 mix is a terrific showcase for the work of sound designer Ben Burtt, who created a sense of aural unease to match the disturbing *mise en scène*.

In an engaging audio commentary, Kaufman articulately describes his process and the contributions of his collaborators. His ideas are explored further in four excellent featurettes that appear on disc two. The 16-minute "Re-Visitors from Outer Space" examines the genesis and themes of the film, and includes interviews with Kaufman, Chapman, and others. Chapman, who plays an alien pod in one scene, also discusses his work in "The Invasion Will Be Televised," a five-minute supplement on the movie's cinematography. The slightly shorter "Practical Magic" focuses on the special effects of the opening sequence, and the 12-minute "The Man Behind the Scream" features Burtt, Kaufman, and sound editor Bonnie Koehler explaining *Invasion*'s rich audio effects.

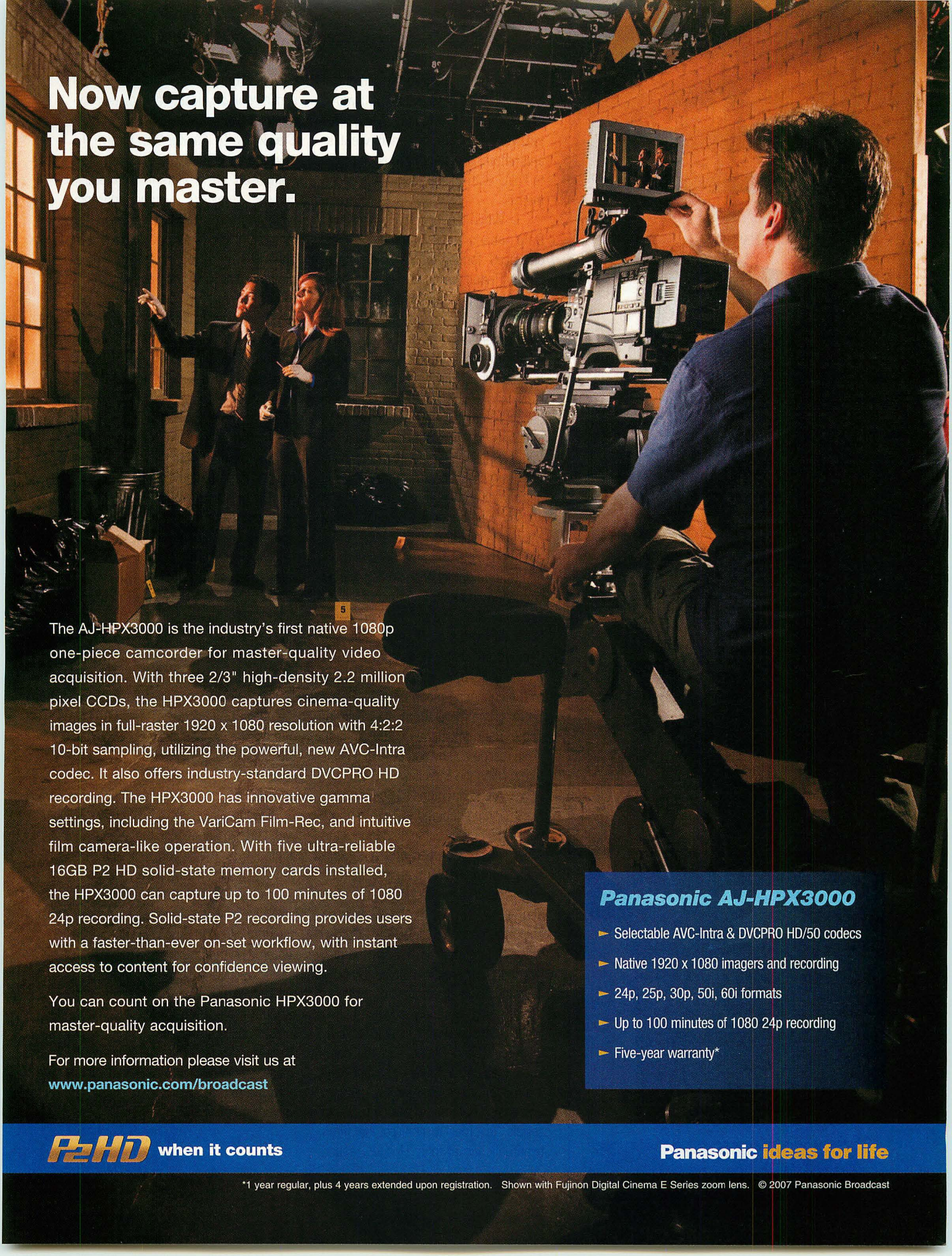
The creepy theatrical trailer that completes the set contains a voice-over narration asserting that *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is "a modern masterpiece." Watching the movie nearly 30 years after its release, it's apparent that this is a rare case of truth in advertising.

— Jim Hemphill



Flash Gordon (1980)
Saviour of the Universe Edition
2.35:1 (16x9 Enhanced)
Dolby Digital 5.1
Universal Home Entertainment, $26.98

Hulking New York Jets quarterback Flash Gordon (Sam J. Jones) is returning from vacation and boards a semi-private jet back to the city. Strange weather patterns have begun to develop in the skies, but Flash ignores this and focuses on attractive Dale Arden (Melody Anderson), his companion on the flight. He is wholly unaware that the



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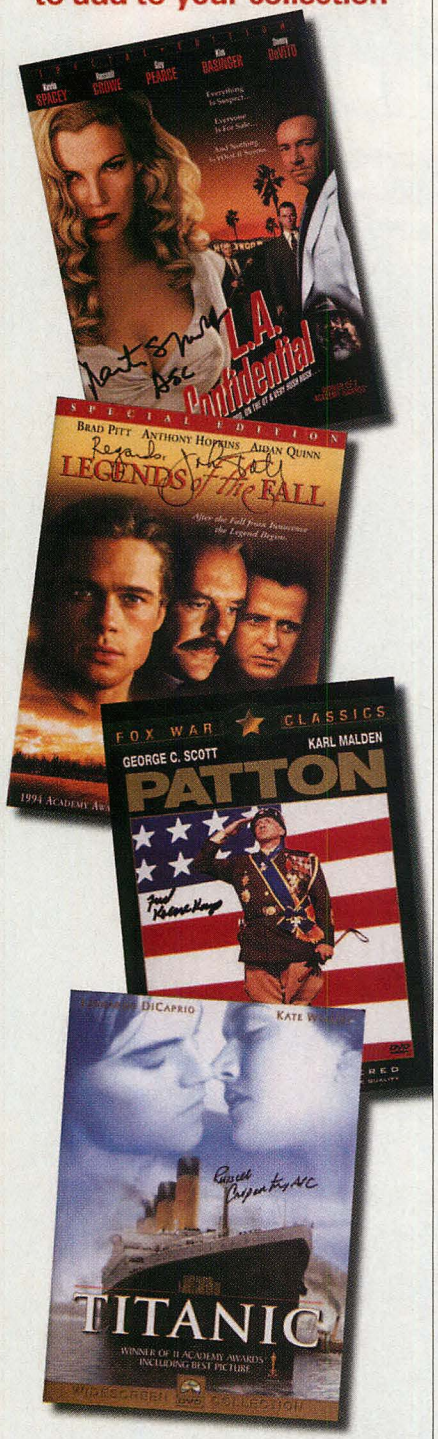
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planet is falling prey to the tyrannical Ming the Merciless (Max Von Sydow) of the planet Mongo; Ming has targeted Earth with inclement weather and natural disasters because he likes to "play with things before destroying them."

While the jet carrying Flash and Dale heads into turbulent skies, disgraced former NASA scientist Dr. Zarkov (Topol) wakes to find his prediction of destructive moon fragments falling to Earth is coming true. As Zarkov prepares to take off in his rocket, which will hone in on the extraterrestrial source of the lunar disturbances, Flash and Dale's jet makes an emergency landing on his property. With moments to spare, the crazed Zarkov forces Flash and Dale to accompany him to deep space. The three unlikely astronauts awake on the planet Mongo, where they are brought before Ming, who instantly orders Flash to be executed, Zarkov to be lobotomized, and Dale to be his bride. When Ming's conniving daughter, Princess Aura (Ornella Muti), spies the handsome Flash during his public execution, she decides to resuscitate him with a mysterious serum and steal him away to a neighboring moon ruled by Prince Barin (Timothy Dalton), her former flame. Barin reluctantly agrees to help Flash rescue Zarkov and Dale and overthrow Ming the Merciless.

Alex Raymond's comic strip *Flash Gordon* debuted in 1934, and its popularity quickly catapulted it onto the silver screen, where it appeared as a serial starring Buster Crabbe in the title role. After being produced as a live-action TV series in 1954 and an animated series in 1979, *Flash Gordon* was reinterpreted as a lush, feature-length film by prolific producer Dino De Laurentiis and director Mike Hodges. The picture, a quirky science-fiction fantasy best known for its epic score by glam-rock band Queen and the cardboard lead performance by former *Playgirl* model Jones, is a largely reverent and campy homage to the comics and serials. In order to conjure the film's hyperbolic visual tone, Hodges tapped designer Donilo Donati to provide a comic-book physicality and cinematographer Gilbert Taylor, BSC (*Repulsion, Star Wars, Dr. Strangelove*) to give the adventure a colorful, otherworldly zeal. Composed on a vibrant anamorphic canvas, Taylor's cinematography embraces the artifice that serves the tongue-in-cheek style of the picture and enhances it with an array of bold primary colors and high-key lighting.

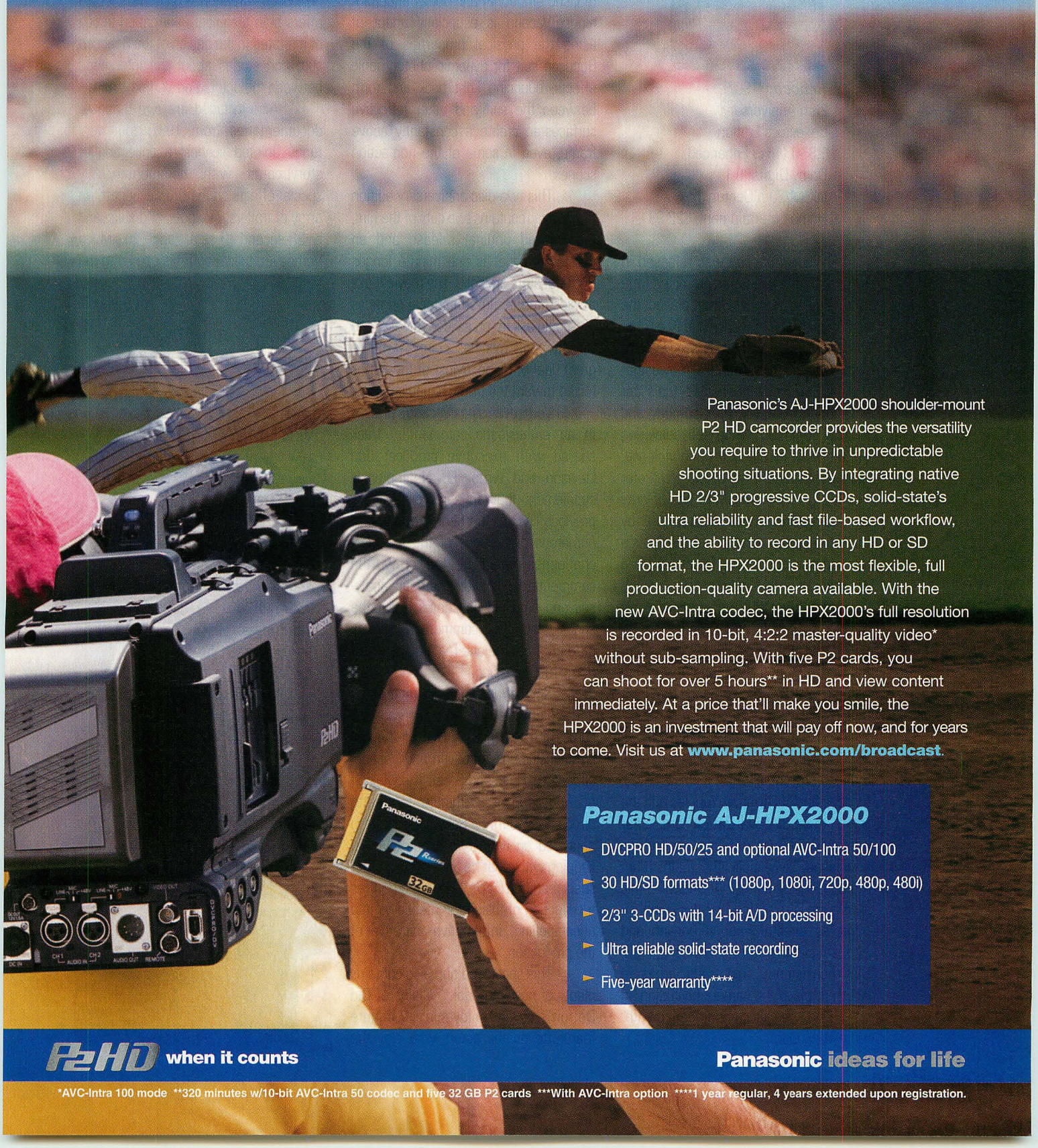
Universal Home Entertainment recently re-issued *Flash Gordon* on DVD in a "Saviour of the Universe" special edition. The previous DVD transfer, released in 1998, lacked 16x9 enhancement and appears to have been mastered from worn source elements with inconsistent colors, but this new edition makes up for that. Remastered from what appears to be excellent source material, this new, 16x9-enhanced picture transfer is extremely accurate and faithful to Taylor's ornate color palette, with heavily saturated hues and solid blacks. The newly remixed Dolby Digital 5.1 track is strong, giving Queen's bass-heavy score a lot of presence and offering fun directional effects and surround-channel activity.

In spite of the film's financially disappointing theatrical release, over the years it has garnered a faithful cult of fans. They will be pleased by some of the supplements on this DVD, which include a lively and insightful conversation with comic artist and devoted *Flash Gordon* fan Alex Ross, an amusing chat with Lorenzo Semple Jr., the film's original theatrical trailer, and, best of all, the very first serial episode from 1936. Overall, though, it's a shame more substantial supplements were not included, considering that many more were featured on the British Region 2 DVD.

Despite the limited extras, fans will rejoice at this glowing, new presentation of the film, which has never looked or sounded better on home screens. Hodges' entertainingly corny space adventure lives on, sending its peroxide-blonde hero out to save the universe once again.

— Kenneth Sweeney

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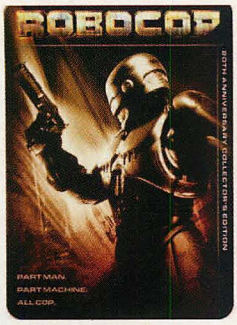
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Robocop (1987)
20th Anniversary
Collector's Edition
1.85:1 (16x9 Enhanced)
Dolby Digital 5.1
MGM/20th Century Fox
Home Entertainment, $22.98

When *Robocop* was released in 1987, the advertisements promised little more than a B movie that placed the archetype of the maverick cop in a robot suit. Yet audiences quickly realized this was something different, a movie that used genre conventions as tools for philosophical inquiry, dark comedy and heartfelt emotion, while still delivering the requisite pyrotechnics and violence. *Robocop* tells the story of Murphy (Peter Weller), a cop killed in the line of duty who is resurrected as a "Robocop" by the corporation that runs the police department. His memory is erased when scientists merge him with the technology of his robot suit, but dreams of his past continue to haunt him, and he struggles to comprehend his own identity while fighting crime and uncovering corruption within the company that built him.

Like many great sci-fi films, *Robocop* is less about the future it depicts than the present in which it was created. Its depiction of cutthroat Yuppies and the trend toward privatization are clear reflections of Reagan's America, and the filmmakers slyly mock the mainstream attitudes of the culture. The film's comic sensibility is reinforced by the compositions, as director Paul Verhoeven and frequent collaborator Jost Vacano, ASC, BVK consistently find witty areas in which to place the camera (including, in one scene, the space underneath a bathroom-stall door).

Vacano's lighting is equally expressive, combining the urban grit of action films like *Dirty Harry* and *Death Wish* with a more stylized pop-art style that gives *Robocop* a truly unique tone: it's a rousing comic-book movie with realistic emotional and social underpinnings. Vacano is especially adept at using the physical properties of the Robocop suit for dynamic photographic effects, bouncing light back and forth between the suit and other reflective surfaces to create a constantly active frame, even in some of the non-action scenes.

This two-disc anniversary edition of *Robocop* contains two cuts of the film, the R-rated original release and an unrated cut that is one minute longer. Both transfers are solid. The movie looks as close to the film's theatrical prints as one could ask for on a video release, and the surround mix has clarity, if not a great deal of range. (Most of the film is mixed toward the front channels.)

Verhoeven sings Vacano's praises in an enthusiastic commentary track shared with executive producer Jon Davison and writer Ed Neumeier, a supplement that appeared on MGM's previous DVD of the film. In addition to numerous discussions of the technical challenges faced by the crew, the commentators provide thematic analyses and amusing anecdotes about the shoot. (Note: This commentary track is different from the one featured on Criterion's 1998 pressing.)

Several documentary featurettes and deleted scenes are spread out across the two discs. Most of the key crew, including Verhoeven and Vacano, appear in "Flesh and Steel: The Making of *Robocop*," a 37-minute featurette directed by Jeffrey Schwarz that also appeared on MGM's previous DVD. In keeping with what he has done for other special-edition DVDs, Schwarz organizes a collection of insightful interviews into a compelling, informative narrative of the production.

This special edition also contains plenty of new material. "Villains of Old Detroit" is an enjoyable 17-minute featurette on the actors who play the villains in the picture, while the 18-minute "Special Effects: Then and Now" includes fascinating interviews and behind-the-scenes footage relating to the movie's effects work. But the best of the new documentaries is the 20-minute "*Robocop:* Creating a Legend," which offers both technical information (much of it related to the design of the Robocop suit) and stories about the interaction between the actors and Verhoeven.

Also included are two 8-minute documentaries from 1987; four very funny deleted scenes; a collection of storyboards with commentary by special-effects animator Phil Tippett; an array of trailers, TV spots, and stills; and a 38-second "Easter egg" in which Verhoeven talks about his cameo in the film.

— Jim Hemphill

■

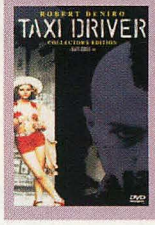
NEXT MONTH'S REVIEWS



Jean Renoir Collector's Edition
(1925-1962)
Cinematographers:
Jean Bachelet, Alphonse Gibory, Edmund Corwin, Jean-Paul Alphen, Jean Bourgoin, Alain Douarinou, Jean Louis, Jean-Marie Maillols, Georges Leclerc



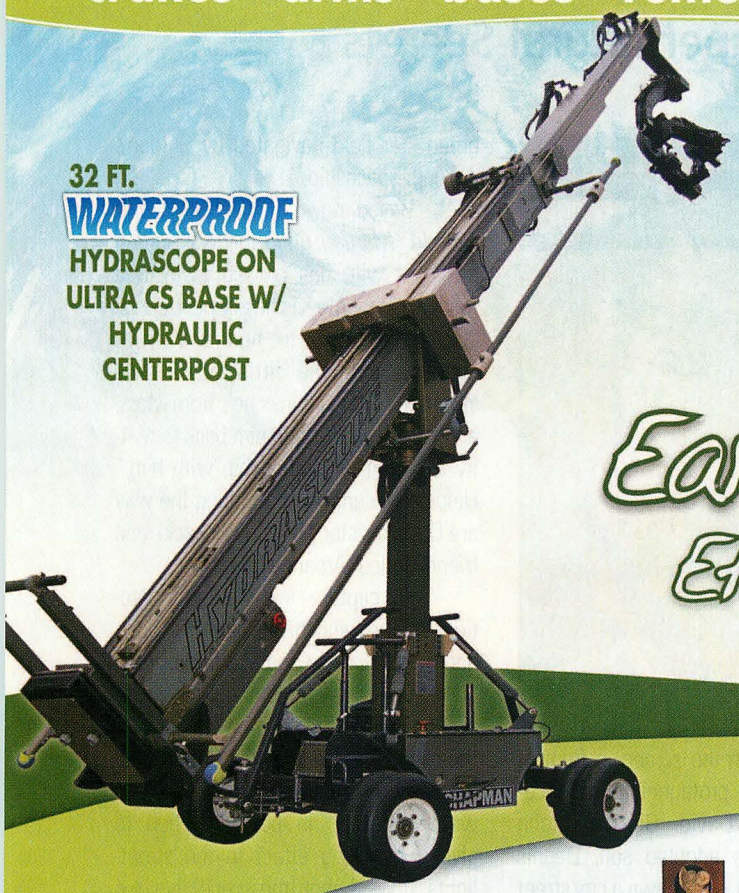
If... (1968)
Cinematographer:
Miroslav Ondricek, ASC, ACK



Taxi Driver (1976)
Cinematographer:
Michael Chapman, ASC

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Above: Science-fiction writer David Gordon (John Cusack) struggles to connect with his newly adopted son, Dennis (Bobby Coleman), who believes he is from Mars. Below: In a minor breakthrough, David finds that he and Dennis share a fondness for cold treats.

The Son From Outer Space

by Jon Witmer

Sitting in FotoKem with colorist Jim Garrow and finessing the video transfer for his latest feature, *Martian Child*, cinematographer Robert Yeoman, ASC turns his attention to the scene under review. On the screen in front of him, the film's protagonists, science-fiction writer David Gordon (John Cusack) and his adopted son, Dennis (Bobby Coleman), drive down a city street at dusk. As they drive, the streetlights reflected on the windshield begin to streak, assuming the appearance of a green star field navigated by Gordon's car-cum-spaceship.



Based on the novel by David Gerrold, *Martian Child* follows Gordon after his wife has passed away and follows his journey as he adopts Dennis. "David struggles to find a way to connect with the little boy," says Yeoman. "Dennis thinks he's from Mars, and David has to bring him back to reality and form a relationship with him." Helping the unlikely pair along the way are David's sister, Liz (Joan Cusack), and friend Harlee (Amanda Peet).

To capture the stylized reflections on the windshield, "we shot John and Bobby in a car against greenscreen on a stage," says Yeoman. "Later, the second unit shot plates that we used for the reflections and the background out the windows. These background plates were enhanced in postproduction to give a streaking effect to the streetlights. If we'd shot [the scene] live, we only would have had 30 to 60 minutes to do it. By shooting on stage, the director and actors could take their time with the performance, and we were able to maintain a very consistent dusk look."

Martian Child was filmed over 45 days, and Yeoman was given five weeks to prep it with director Menno Meyjes. "We looked at a lot of references," recalls the cinematographer. "Early on we were focused on the story's fantasy aspects and we looked at several films, including *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. As our process of discovering the movie progressed, we veered away from fantasy toward a more realistic story."

All the same, moments of magical realism do spring up, evidenced in the driving scene and again at the film's end, as David and Dennis stand atop an observatory dome and are approached

Martian Child photos courtesy of New Line.

Australia

Brazil

Canada

China

Czech Republic

England

France

Hong Kong

Ireland

Italy

Japan

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Mexico

New Zealand

Philippines

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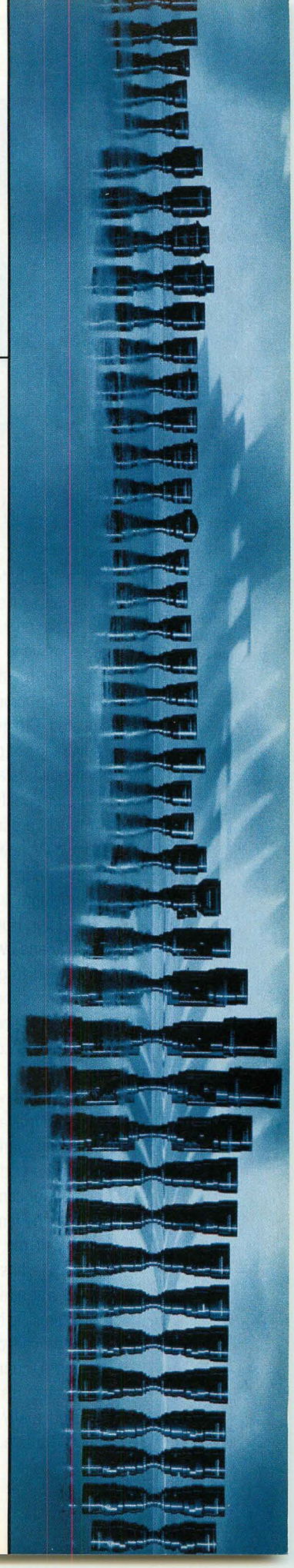
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Harlee (Amanda Peet) shows an interest in the single dad and his unique son.

by a helicopter Dennis believes is a Martian spacecraft. These two scenes were the only ones that required green-screen work, and only one other set was built, the basement level of Gordon's home, where Dennis' room is located. Otherwise, the production took advantage of practical locations around Vancouver (standing in for an unnamed Northern California town), and Yeoman credits production designer Hugo Luczyc-Wyhowski with bringing out the best in each locale. "We put a lot of energy into looking at locations, and whenever Hugo would design a set, Menno and I were closely involved. We also tried to give Hugo as much information as possible about how we planned to shoot each scene. It was a very close collaboration among the three of us."

Building his crew locally, Yeoman made one of his first hires by selecting gaffer Chris Meakes, with whom he had previously worked on a number of commercials. "Chris brought a lot to the film and was often one step ahead of me," says the cinematographer. "He has a great eye for lighting and it was a real pleasure to collaborate with him." To head the grip department, Yeoman called on Mike Kirilenko, who "came recommended by production. Mike and his crew were great; they worked really hard and always had a good attitude." Another recommendation from production was A-camera 1st AC Patrick Stepien, who was "an excellent focus puller and an overall positive force on the set. He's a character with a great sense of humor and the crew had a lot of fun with him."

Approaching the film as primarily a single-camera show, Yeoman often operated himself, but operator Jim Van Dijk was on hand for the occasional two-camera setup and to operate the Steadicam. Assisted by focus puller Ian Seabrook, Van Dijk was also sent out regularly to pick up second-unit shots.

Renting from Panavision Vancouver, the filmmakers' camera package comprised a Panaflex Platinum, a set of Primo primes, and a 17.5-75mm T2.3 Primo zoom. "The primes were our lenses of choice," says Yeoman. "We used the 40mm a lot, and for close-ups we often used the 75mm." Except for an occasional Polarizer, Yeoman eschewed filtration on the lens.

Describing the camera movement throughout the film, Yeoman recalls, "We didn't do a lot of handheld. There was a fair amount of dolly work, and the grips had designed a lightweight jib arm called the telejib that came in handy. Jim Van Dijk was an excellent Steadicam operator, and I knew that he could be relied upon to find a great shot." Yeoman and Meyjes storyboarded most of the film during prep, but on set they often let Cusack do what he felt was most natural and the blocking often changed. "We shot several of John's scenes on the Steadicam for flexibility and didn't worry about marks," says Yeoman.

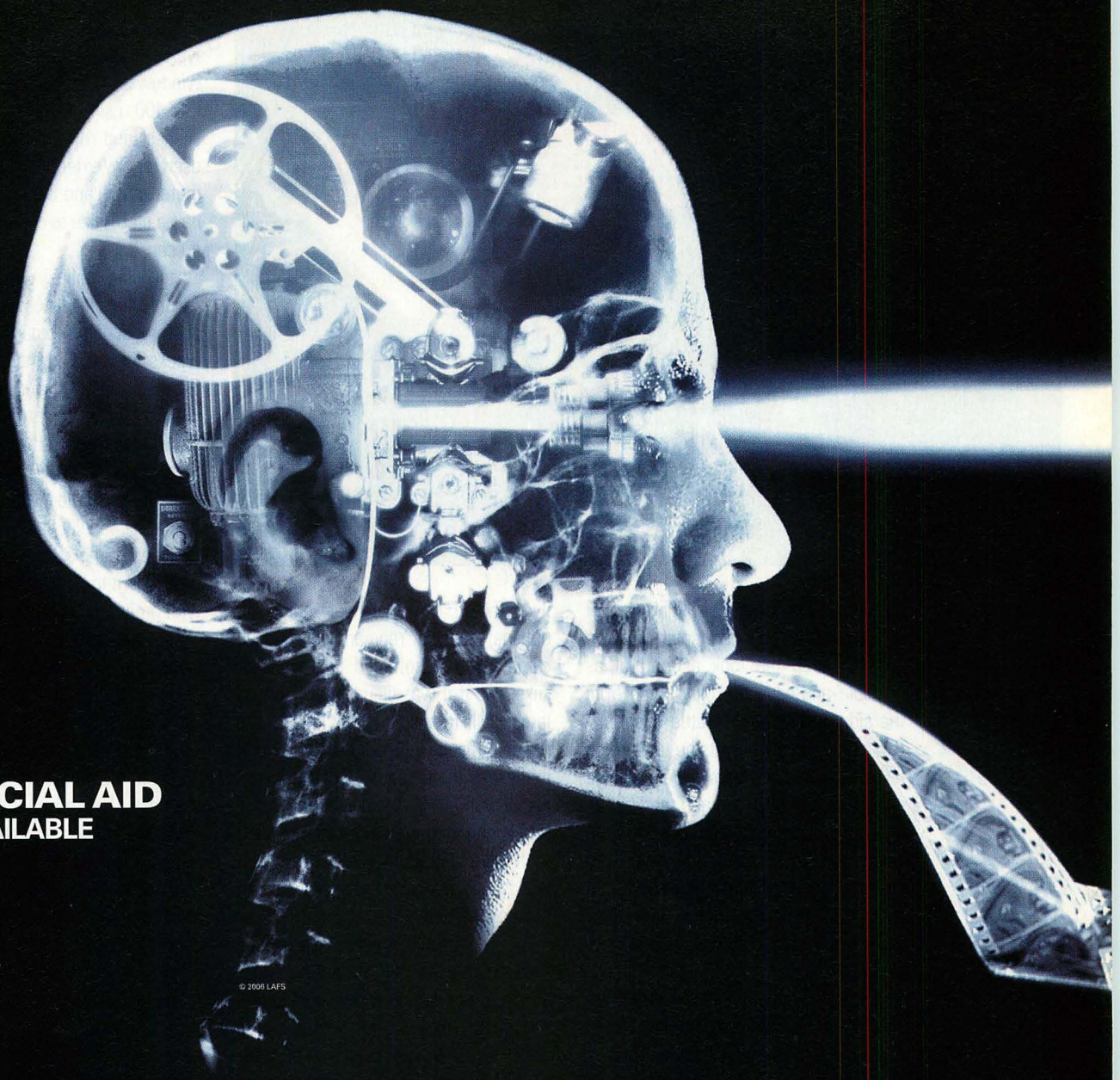
The production also used a Technocrane to achieve a handful of shots, an opportunity Yeoman cherished. "I love the Technocrane — it opens up all kinds of possibilities for camera movement," he enthuses. For one shot that follows Liz through Gordon's house, "the camera was on the Technocrane outside the house, looking through the window of the kitchen on the second floor where Liz starts. Then, as she goes down the steps to Dennis' room in the basement, we followed her through the windows, tracking over and telescoping in to be closer to her."

Gordon's house presented its fair share of challenges. Yeoman recalls, "It had bright white walls, which are always difficult. I like to use soft lighting sources, so we needed large cutters to keep the light off the walls as much as possible. Another restriction was that we were not allowed to hang anything for fear of damage, so all of our equipment had to work from the floor." Further complicating matters, the house was situated atop a steep hill surrounded by trees, making it nearly impossible to set up fixtures outside the windows, and a swimming pool claimed the space outside of the kitchen and dining-room windows. "I often tried to schedule shots in those two rooms for morning, when I knew the light would be coming through the windows," says Yeoman.

On the rare occasion when the crew could place lights outside, Yeoman favored 6K Pars, which the electrical department also kept stationed on the building's flat roof. "We originally put those Pars on the roof to pound through the skylights, but it often gets so dark during the day in Vancouver that we ended up using them to light the dense forest for shots inside the house looking out," notes Yeoman. "Even during the day we sometimes had almost no light out there!"

Throughout the shoot, the cine-

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Robert Yeoman, ASC frames Cusack and Coleman as they stock a cart with breakfast cereal.

matographer avoided hard light in favor of soft, often bounced sources. "We tried to keep the look as natural as possible and have the light come from the side, just to build a little contrast." Explaining the book lights he used regularly, Yeoman elaborates, "We'd bounce a light into a white card and then put up a frame of some sort of diffusion in front of it, usually 216. Sometimes we used Opal if we needed a little more light, and if we had space for a large light and I really wanted to soften it, I used grid-cloth."

When shooting inside with tungsten units, the cinematographer would often warm the lights with gels. "There's a Christmas scene where John and Joan Cusack are walking around the dining-room table at her house. We had a number of practicals in the scene, and we tried to keep everything really warm. We filled the actors with a moving China ball that was dimmed way down to keep the color temperature consistent with our other tungsten lights, which were gelled with ½ CTO."

Many of the challenges posed by Gordon's home resurfaced in a large atrium chosen as the location for one of his book signings. One wall was all glass and the others were white. "It was a day scene, and the interior was heavily affected by what was going on outside," recalls Yeoman. "If the sun came out, we softened its rays with silks, and if it was cloudy, we bounced large HMIs to raise the light levels. The major difficulty [throughout the shoot] really was the weather, because it was just so varied. We were shooting in the late spring, and we were often dealing with days that alternated between sun and clouds; we were always trying to balance the two."

For exterior scenes, "we usually tried to use an 18K or a 6K, either bouncing or through a diffusion frame. It's always nice to get something in actors' eyes. We also used a lot of white cards." Those white cards ably proved their worth during a scene on a golf course that would not allow the production to use a generator on the premises. "We were lucky that it was overcast that day. We used white cards below the camera to fill whenever possible."

Framing for 1.85:1 and shooting with two Kodak stocks — Vision 250D 5246 and Vision2 500T 5218 — Yeoman typically maintained a shooting stop of T4 for interiors and T5.6 or T8 for exteriors. "I like to get a fair amount of depth of field, but I don't usually shoot at T16 or T11. Also, sometimes when you're in an interior and you're looking out windows, you have to bump [the interior light level] up if it's bright outside. I don't typically use a lot of ND gels on the windows." Yeoman rated the 5218 at ISO 400, using it for interior and night scenes, and reveals that for the 5246, used for day exteriors, "I typically set my meter at 250 and then opened up about half a stop. I like to overexpose just a bit if I can."

Film dailies were provided by Technicolor in Vancouver, and during postproduction Yeoman was given two weeks for a digital intermediate (DI) at FotoKem under the guiding hands of colorist Walter Volpatto. "Our plan with the DI was to keep the early part of the film, when Dennis is still in the orphanage, slightly cooler with less color saturation. Gradually, as the relationship between Dennis and David develops, we timed it to be a little warmer overall, with greater color saturation."

The digital grade also proved invaluable in smoothing out Vancouver's fickle exteriors. "The DI's always great for that, because you can cut the contrast on the sunny shots to better match to the part of the scene that was overcast. The baseball scene, which was shot in one day, started in pouring rain and ended in a gloriously sunny afternoon. The DI was essential in keeping that scene consistent." Furthermore, John Cusack's wardrobe had a lot of black, and "it took some work in the DI to get any detail [in it]."

Remembering Cusack's on-set antics with a smile, Yeoman leans back and recounts a scene that takes place in the hallway outside of Dennis' room. In the scene, Cusack walks down the stairs and stands in the hallway. "Every time John came down, he'd try something different and would go to a different place. Then, on one take, he stopped right next to the light, where he looked totally overlit. Concentrating on performance, Menno said, 'That's it! Print it! We're moving on! Johnny, are you happy?' And John said, 'That was it!' I looked at Chris Meakes and we both shared a laugh, knowing that for lighting it could not have been worse."

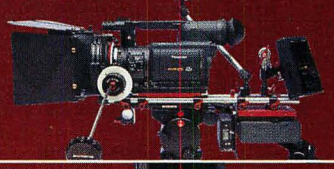
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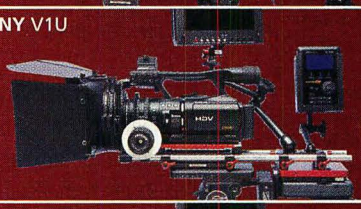


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Above: In *Sarah Landon and the Paranormal Hour*, the titular teen character probes the darker side of Pine Valley, a small California town with ghostly secrets. Cinematographer Andrew Kuepper, who utilized the Panasonic HVX200 HDV camera with Redrock Microsystems' M2 cinema lens adapter, chose open-face lights at full spot in night exteriors to light bits of the background. Right: An unsettled Landon investigates a strange occurrence outside. "The scary world was built around two colors, steel green and steel blue," Keupper notes.

Ghost Town

by Jim Hemphill

Cinematographer Andrew Kuepper was shooting film before he could write. Exposed to photography at a very young age in his father's camera-repair shop, Kuepper made his first film at the age of 7. "I remember going to school between day one and two of shooting, and I was worried all day because I didn't want to forget what the next scene was," he recalls. "I wasn't old enough to write yet, and the script was all in my head!" Kuepper was hooked, and he ended up studying film at San Diego State, where he learned how to make the most of minimal resources. "We had to deal with aging and poorly maintained equipment. That gave everyone a *MacGyver* edge, where a bit of tape and spit could make anything work."

Kuepper's training in on-the-fly filmmaking served him well on the digital production *Sarah Landon and the Paranormal Hour*, his first feature as director of photography. The supernatural tale follows the adventures of the titular character, a teenager who arrives in the small town of Pine Valley, California, only to discover that the village has many secrets — and, apparently, its share of ghosts. As Sarah investigates a local mystery that involves two brothers, an area psychic and an evil spirit, she learns that Pine Valley has a dark side.



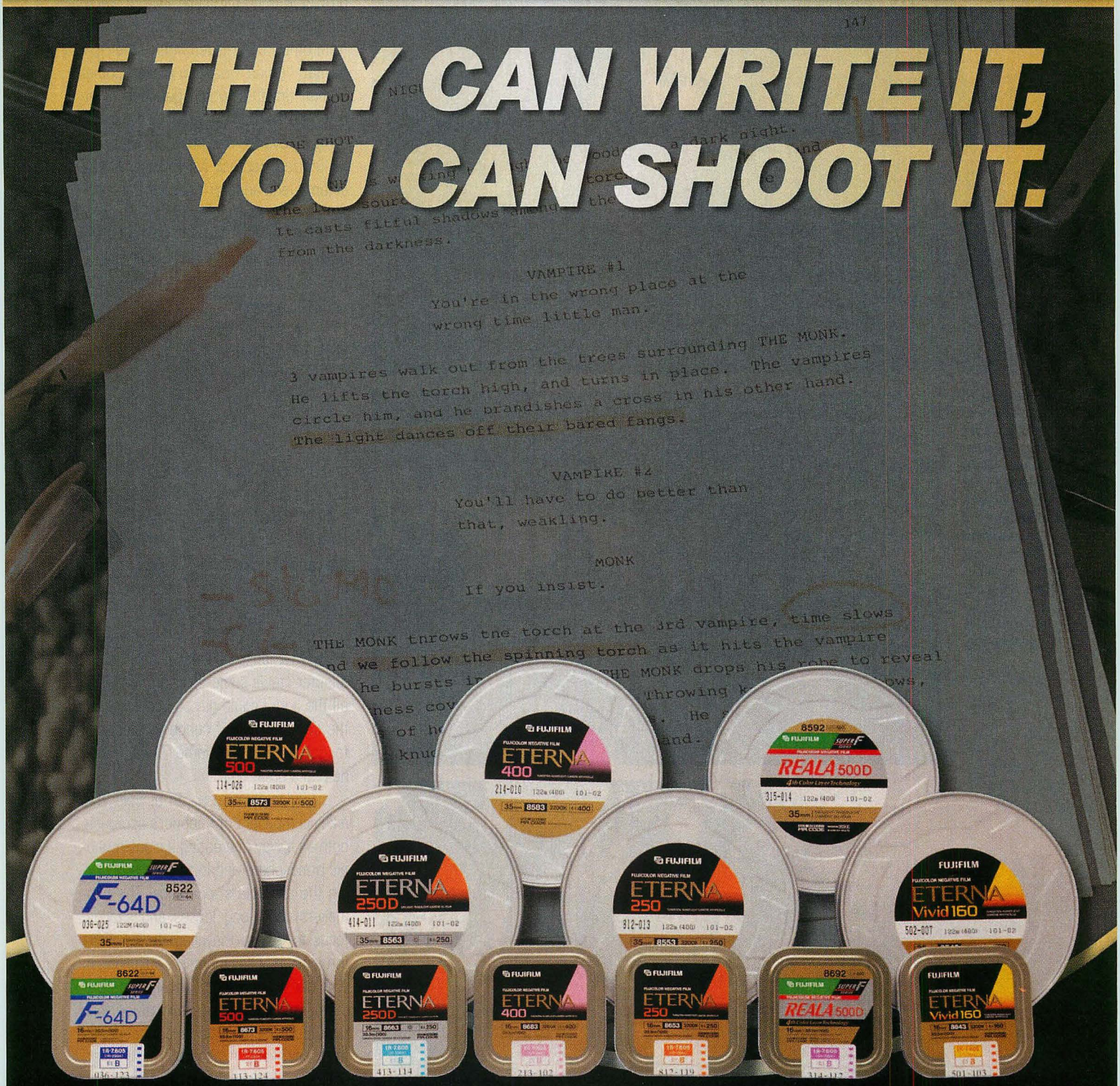
Kuepper took full advantage of the town's dual nature when conceptualizing his visual style. The vision he and director Lisa Comrie shared for the film entailed creating two distinct looks for the worlds Sarah inhabits. "There's the happy world, where I went for a rich, saturated, almost Technicolor look with nice rims and good fill," he explains. Then, for the "scary" world, the filmmakers called upon two influences that might seem unusual for a family film: *Saw* and *The Matrix*. "The scary world was built around two colors, steel green and steel blue," Kuepper elaborates. "That world lost a lot of fill to make things more contrasty and unnerving." The notion of two separate worlds within the drama was also the guiding principle for the lighting. "The choices made for daytime were based on a commercial model, with soft light on the actors and environments. We used large HMI units either bounced or turned into book lights, and planned many of the shots around using the sun. The diffusion we used most was bleached muslin, and on day interiors we used scaled-down versions of the same lighting style: book light for the actors and bounce light for the backgrounds.

"For night exteriors, we used many open-face lights at full spot to light bits of the background," he continues. "To light the actors, we set up a few 8-foot bounces overhead for them to walk into." As with the day scenes, night interiors were lit in a modified version of the exterior approach: "We balanced both light and dark spots in each set," says Kuepper. "If the actor was lit, the background wasn't, and as they moved around, the opposite would be true. We were conscious to have some spot of light at exposure in every night shot so we

Sarah Landon photos and frames courtesy of Andrew Kuepper.

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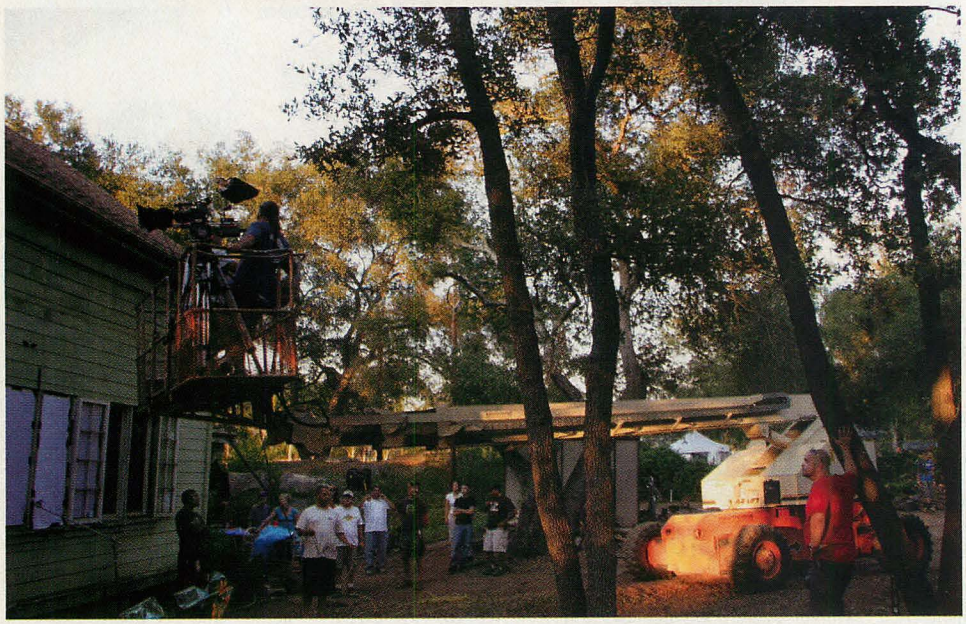
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Above: Landon (Rissa Walters) searches for clues. Middle: Kuepper (left) checks the light ratio between Walters and the dappled background. Below: Kuepper drafts a Condor into service for better camera positioning.



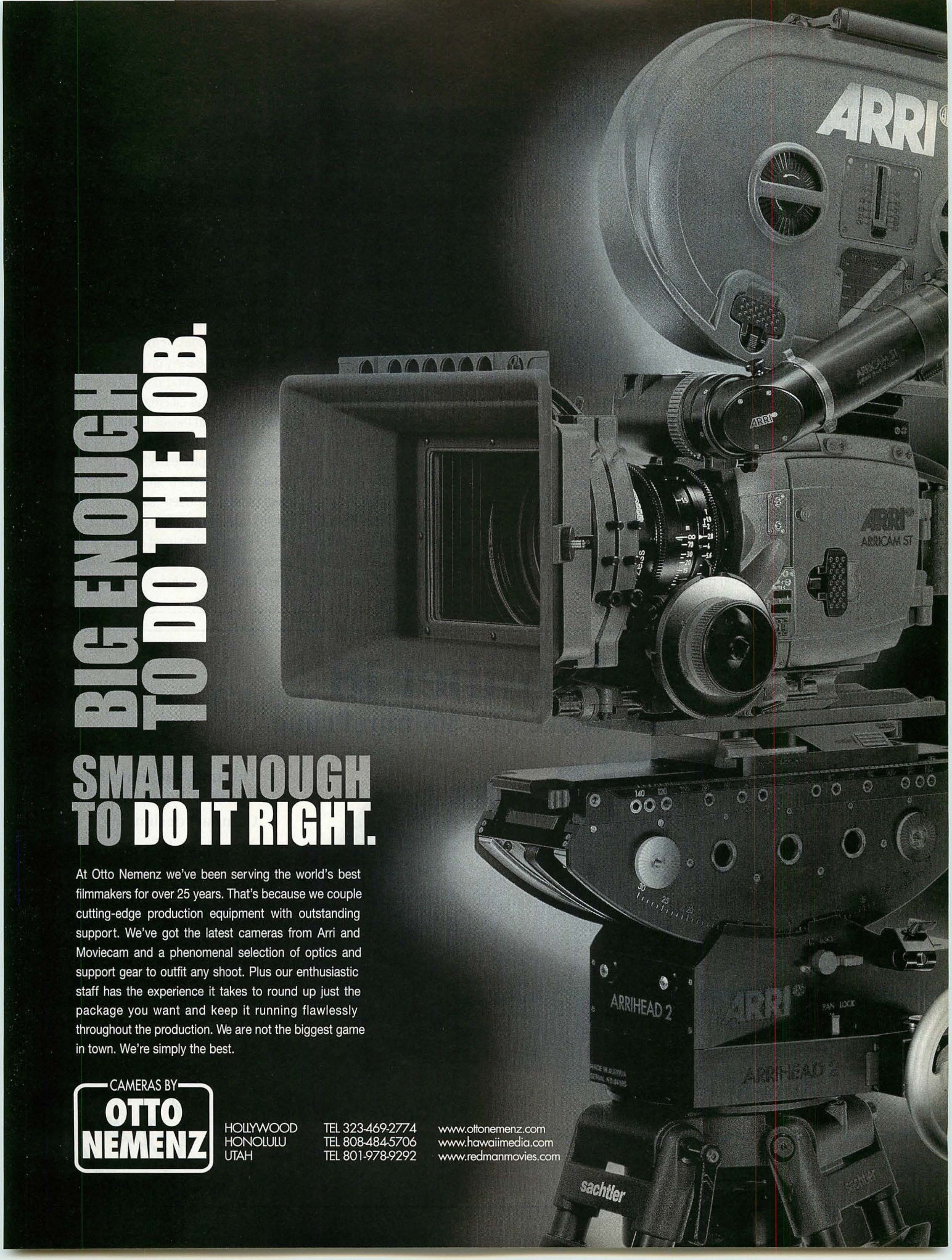
could underexpose the actors."

Though Kuepper came to the project with no particular love of video, his desire to distinguish *Sarah Landon* from other features led him to the HDV format. "I didn't want to make another 35mm film that would get lost in the mix," he says. "I wanted to do something innovative and new." To that end, he utilized Redrock Microsystems' M2 cinema lens adapter to achieve a traditional cinematic look with a Panasonic HVX200 camera. The M2 enables filmmakers to adapt 35mm still-photography and motion-picture lenses to DV and HD cameras.

Kuepper chose the HVX200 because he felt it had the strongest "negative" of the cameras he considered. "Due to its codec, it was the most lossless. It had a crushy feel to it, like film." By adding the Redrock adapter and a set of Nikon Nikkor lenses, Kuepper was able to maintain a limited depth of field and a high-enough image quality for the 35mm filmout. (He shot at 720p in the camera's native 16x9 aspect ratio.) "I really love the Nikkors," he says. "They have a warm feel, and they're sharp and hold good focus to the edges. I needed really fast lenses because the Redrock adapter steals some light, and I needed all the light I could get so I could adjust the depth of field if needed. I managed to get a T1.2 and some T1.4s, which helped a great deal."

Manipulating depth of field was a key component of Kuepper's approach, both as a way of creating a claustrophobic atmosphere and in terms of conveying the characters' emotions. The filmmakers used long lenses and shallow focus to isolate the characters, raising the tension at key moments. "The 85mm was our favorite lens," recalls the cinematographer. "It made everything look beautiful, crushing the field just enough to create nice portrait views of the characters." He added a Polarizer to bring out the clouds in exteriors, and occasionally used a graduated ND filter to knock down overexposed areas. "I even slipped one in sideways once, and it saved us from using a bunch of silk!"

Despite Kuepper's affection for



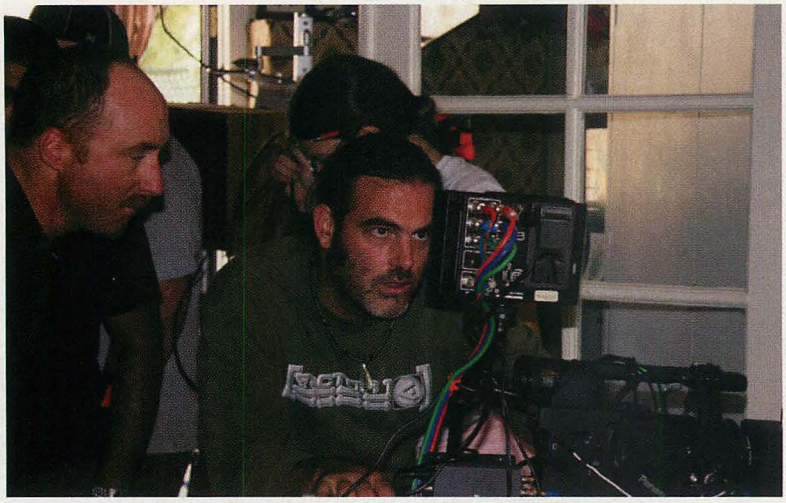
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Kuepper (right) double-checks the framing on a portable LCD monitor.

the Nikkor lenses, they created a number of challenges when teamed with the then-new Redrock adapter. "At the time, there was no established way to adapt the Nikkors to any kind of focus system," he explains. "I tried many different methods, beginning with RC-model car gears hollowed out to fit around the lenses with set screws. These caused problems with distortion, because I failed to get a setting where the screws didn't warp the ring. I ended up getting some prototype zip-tie gears from Steve Weiss at Zacuto Rentals in Chicago; those were basically zip ties with Cinegear pitch teeth. I modified a Heden motor with one of those RC car parts and managed to get a pretty decent electrically controlled focus system." He has high praise for his 1st AC, Allen Achterburg, who maintained focus using this improvised method. "The conditions made 35mm pulling look easy," Kuepper asserts. "Our lens markings were not lining up and couldn't be trusted due to a minor problem in our optical system, so Allen had to use eye focus marks and 'Zen' the focus. He deserves a lot of credit for not missing."

Kuepper gives kudos to other colleagues, including gaffer Ama MacDonald and key grip Joe Ernst, for enabling him to achieve the desired look on a modest budget. "Ernst brought his 4-foot slider plate early on in production, and I ended up using it for the entire show," recalls the cinematographer. "It allowed me to do moves in tight places and adjust for stacking without needing a dolly. Slight pushes added a lot of production value to a shot that would have otherwise been static, or that would have needed precious setup time." Kuepper also used a crane when appropriate, and Steadicam operator Mario Ortez was called in for following

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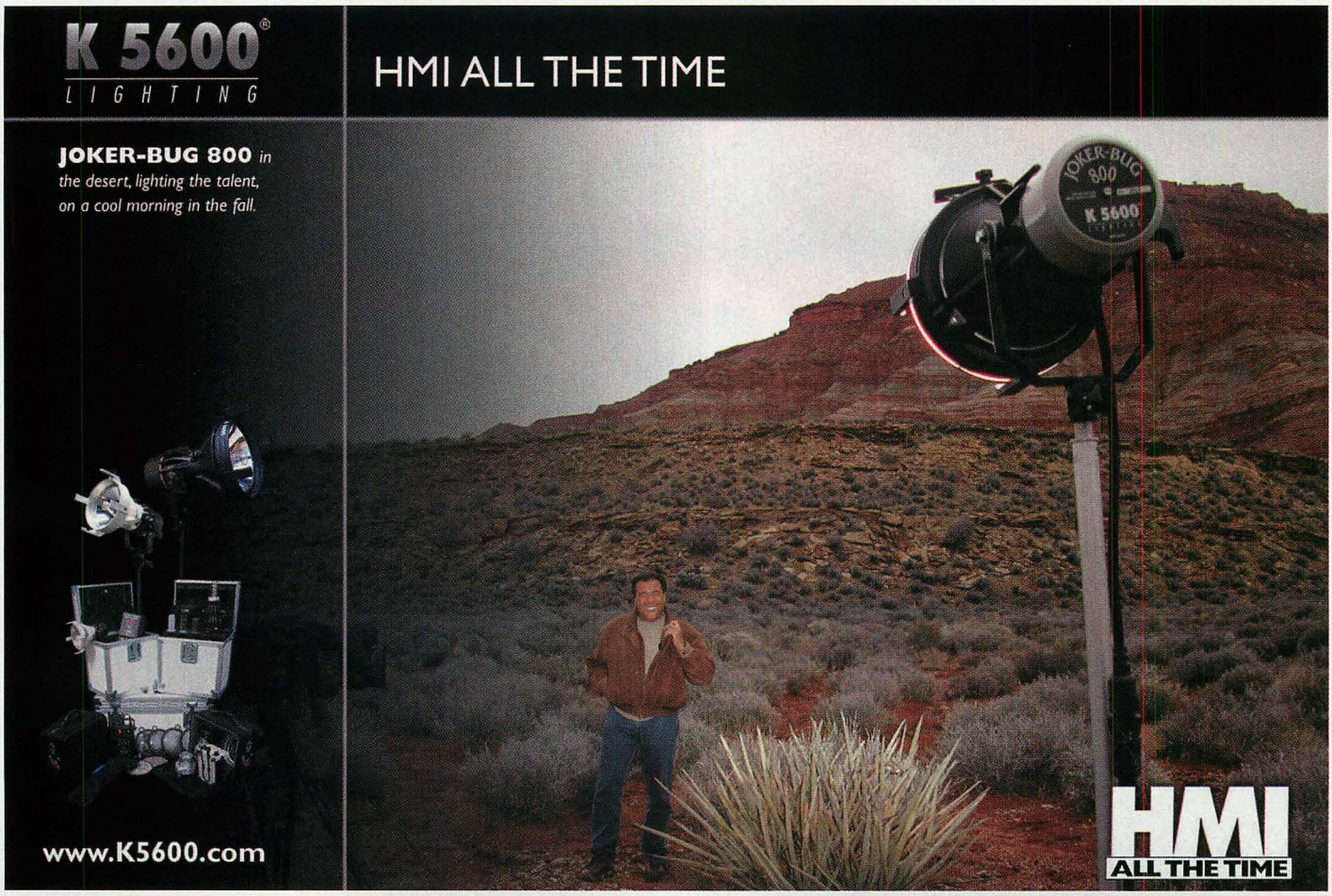
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shots that allowed Kuepper to give the camera a "ghost's-eye" POV.

Shooting with the HVX200 allowed Kuepper to utilize Panasonic's P2 system, bypassing tape entirely in favor of 4- and 8-gigabyte cards. "The P2 system is excellent," he notes. "Before the card even leaves the camera, you can play back scenes and check them on the monitor." The confidence this method provided was especially valuable given that Kuepper was also operating. "Before moving on, I could go back and make sure I hadn't hit any lights, and that Allen nailed the focus, without clunky playback systems and without damaging any tape." Kuepper and his crew worked out an efficient system for storing and backing up the material, which was recorded on four cards — "just barely enough," he notes. "As soon as a card was full, it was handed off to our digital loader/on-set editor, Kellee Hiatt. It would then go into the P2 Store, a handy device Panasonic makes that immediately verifies and drops the clips onto an internal hard drive. The data was copied from the P2 Store to a Macbook Pro, where it was spot-checked and eyeballed in Final Cut Pro. Once the clip was verified as good, it was backed up to our on-set terabyte server, which itself was backed up at night." Kuepper admits that this obsessive approach grew out of his own paranoia about the format. "But I sure slept well at night," he adds.

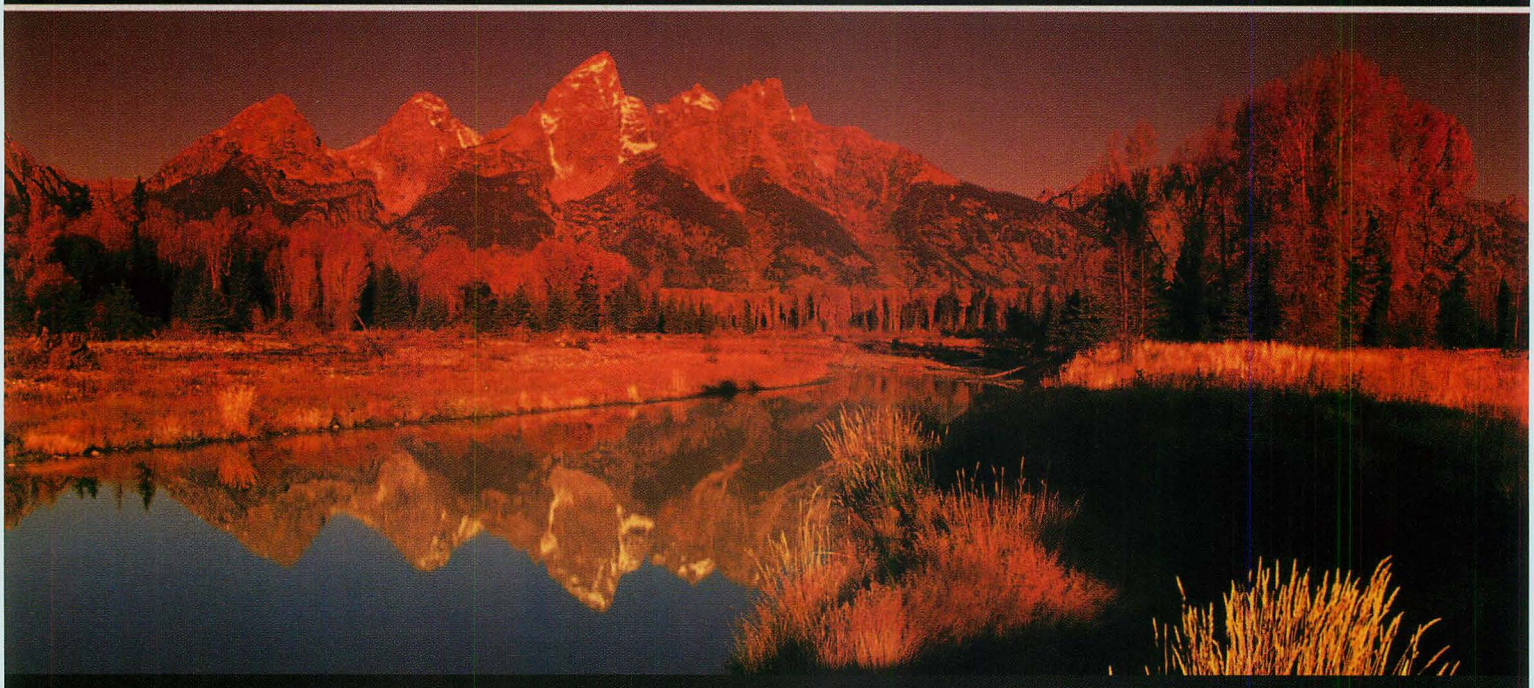
For postproduction, the files were taken to Plaster City Digital Post, where Michael Cioni, Tom Vice and their crew took native timelines from the Final Cut session and logarithmically uprezzed everything to 1080p. "The image looked absolutely beautiful on their 27-foot screen," exclaims Kuepper. "I saw no noticeable artifacting in the upscaled image." He was also pleased with the process of grading with the "extremely fast and powerful" Final Touch, which he used to color-correct the movie with Ian Vertovec. The final cut was then taken to the Boxlight system at Hollywood Digital, where it was slightly tweaked for the final film-out and printed on Kodak Vision 2383.

In the end, Kuepper was pleased with the results he got from the Panasonic system and Redrock adapter, in spite of the technology's growing pains. Shooting digitally with the P2 cards also enabled the crew to have a bit of fun, as when the grips made ghost costumes and walked into the middle of a take in which the actors were discussing whether or not their house was haunted. "It caused a great laugh on set," says Kuepper, "and it didn't waste a bit of film!" ■









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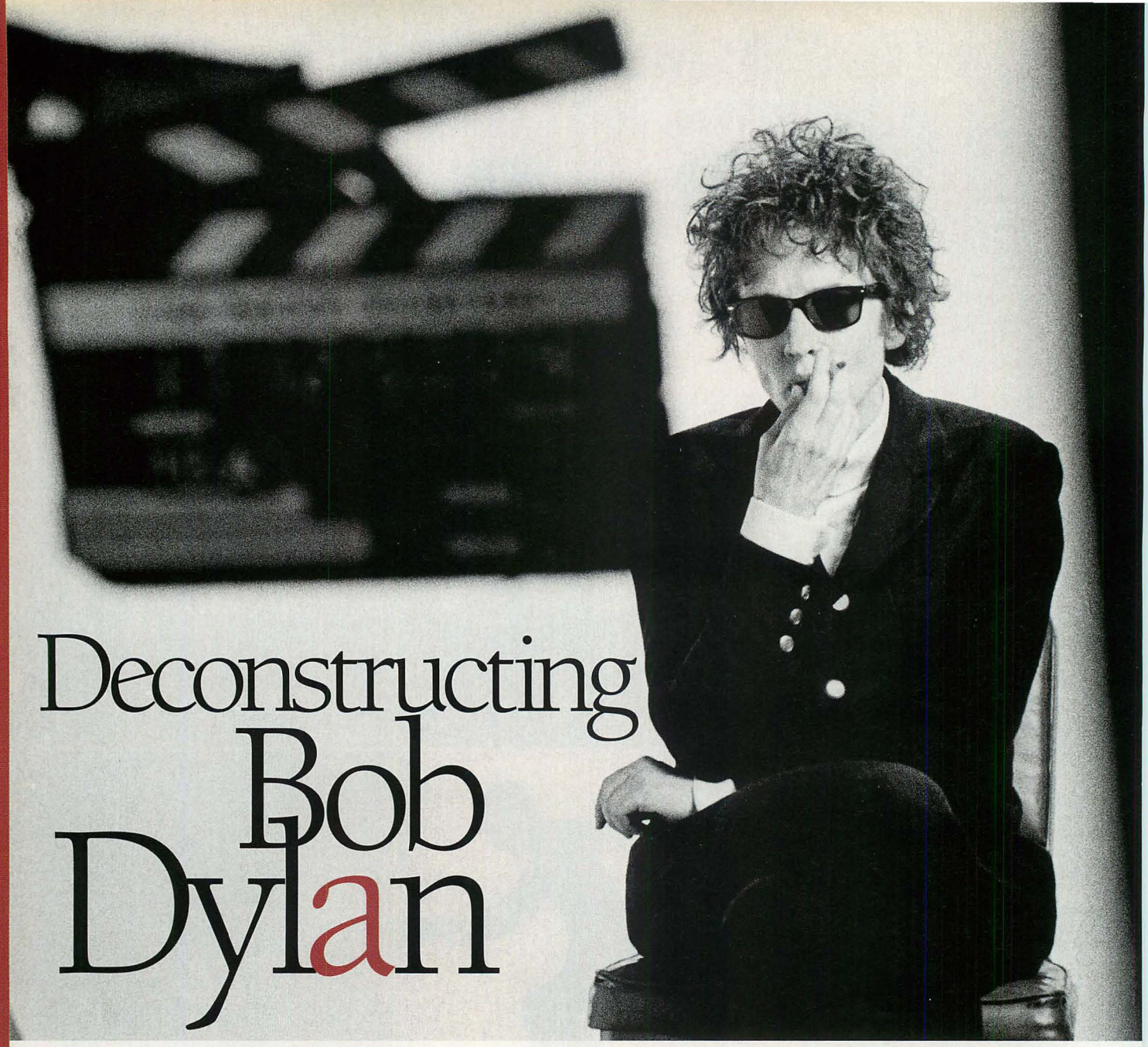






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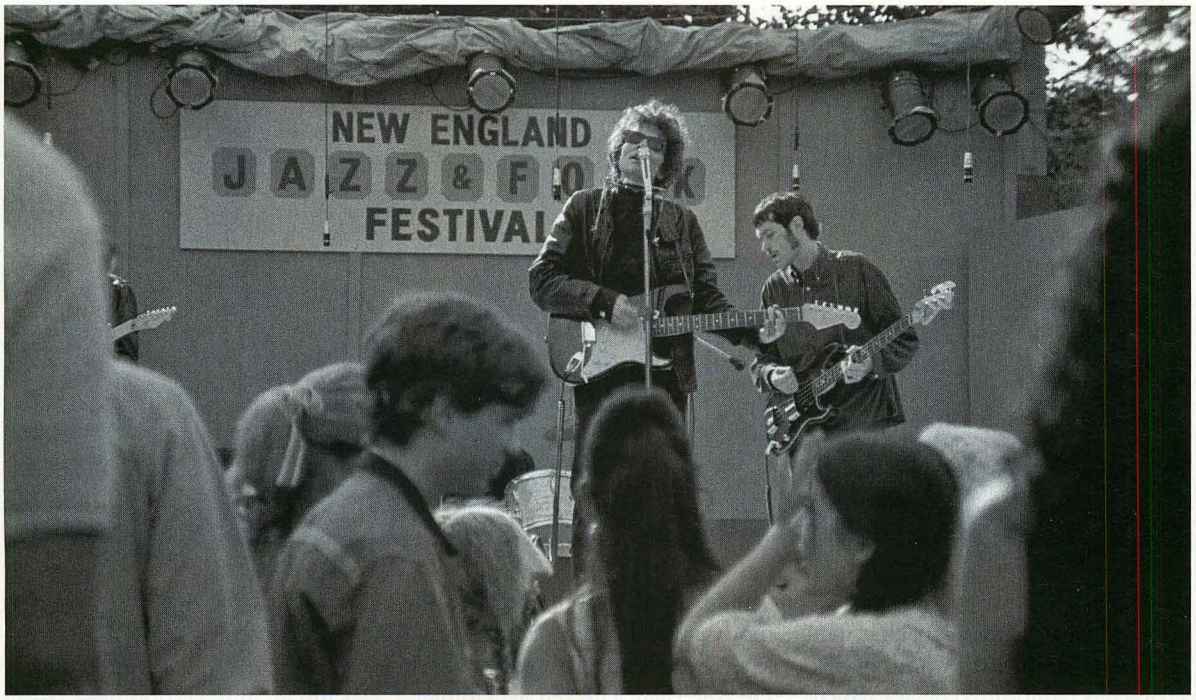
Deconstructing Bob Dylan

I'm Not There, shot by Edward Lachman, ASC, examines various facets of the musical icon's persona.

by Jon Silberg

Unit photography by Jonathan Wenk

Director of photography Edward Lachman, ASC was intrigued when director Todd Haynes told him his idea for *I'm Not There,* an unusual cinematic portrait of singer/songwriter Bob Dylan. The two first discussed the idea as they were wrapping up their collaboration on *Far From Heaven* (*AC* Dec. '02), a modern take on the 1950s melodramas of Douglas Sirk that earned Lachman an Academy Award nomination. During that project, they'd found they shared a desire to explore a variety of visual styles in their future work. Lachman had also been fascinated with Dylan and his music since his teen years. "During the Sixties and Seventies, I was growing up in New York and going to art school, and as I lived through those times, Dylan's early music was always inspirational and prophetic for me. As I studied art history and painting, I became increasingly interested in the imagery in films. I was listening over and over to *Blonde on Blonde,* which only made me think more about images. I thought at the time that it would be impossible to create images for a Dylan song, because his words and



Opposite: Cate Blanchett, as Jude, captures one aspect of Bob Dylan's enigmatic personality. This page, top: In a re-creation of a pivotal moment from Dylan's career, Jude outrages folk-music fans by unexpectedly converting from acoustic guitar to electric. Director Todd Haynes offers, "[Dylan's] electric-guitar music was met with historic opposition from fans, and that fueled him further in the direction punk rockers later took: taunting the audience and trying to generate friction rather than adoration." Below: Cinematographer Ed Lachman, ASC lines up a shot from a boxcar.

music *were* the images."

Haynes' idea was to approach Dylan by way of a series of self-sufficient, dramatically distinct worlds that would each have an entirely different look, feel and cinematic language. "Every biopic has the same story," the director maintains. "The personal side suffers from a public life — not really that unique." Dylan, he elaborates, constantly pushed himself artistically, shedding a persona when it found acceptance and replacing it with one that was often met initially with rejection. After shooting to national prominence as a folk singer, he famously plugged in an electric guitar. Once accepted as a rocker, he made forays into country music and later sang about his conversion to Christianity. As he moved on, he would repudiate his previous incarnation and its fans.

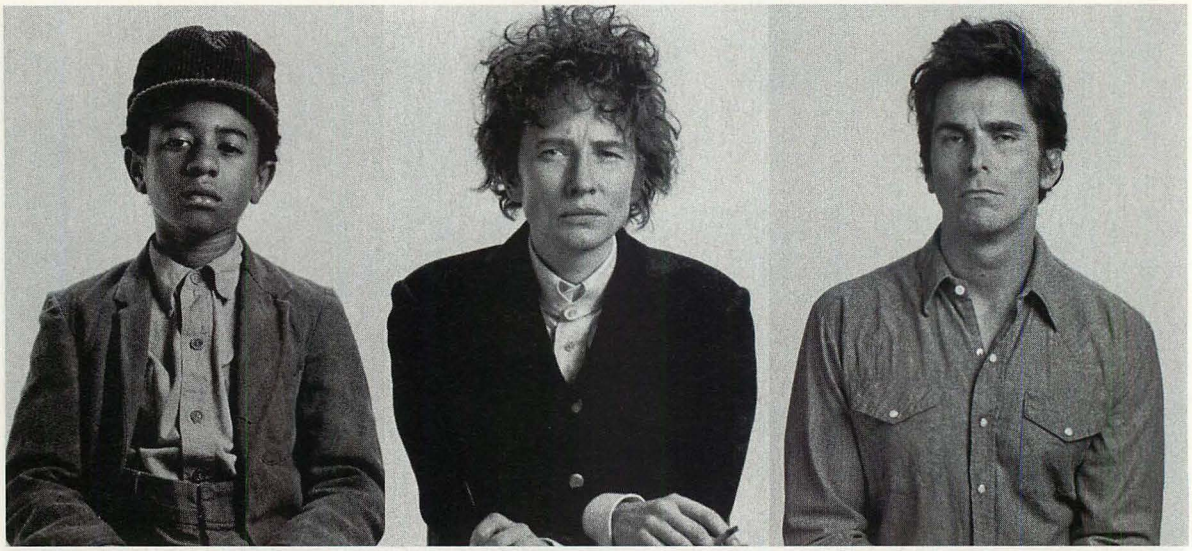
Haynes wanted *I'm Not There* to challenge viewers in the same way. "The only true and honest way to approach Dylan's story for contemporary viewers who seem to know most of the key events in his life was to reproduce that sense of shock," he says. "That's why we have different actors and different characters all representing Dylan." None of the characters is actually named Bob Dylan, but various aspects of his biography and carefully crafted personae are represented by six people: Woody (Marcus Carl Franklin), an 11-year-old African-American boy; Jude (Cate Blanchett), a besieged celebrity; Jack (Christian Bale), a celebrity singer who becomes a born-again preacher; Robby (Heath Ledger), a hip Seventies movie star whose marriage is dissolving; Billy the Kid (Richard Gere), an Old West outlaw trying in vain to find refuge from a corrupt world; and, finally, the muse of the piece, Arthur Rimbaud (Ben Whishaw), a 19th-century poet who became an icon of transgression for Sixties artists.

In creating the different worlds occupied by these characters, the filmmakers assimilated a range of cinematic influences from European and American genres of the Sixties and Seventies. Key inspirations included the early New Wave works of Jean-Luc Godard and the stylized visions of Federico Fellini, who broke away from postwar Italian



Photos and frame grabs courtesy of The Weinstein Co.

Deconstructing Bob Dylan



A rogue's gallery of portrait shots showcases the different faces of Dylan. Top row, from left: Woody (Marcus Carl Franklin), an 11-year-old musical prodigy; Jude (Blanchett), a rock 'n' roll provocateur; and Jack (Christian Bale), a folk singer-turned-preacher. Bottom row, from left: Robby (Heath Ledger), a movie star whose family life begins to disintegrate; Billy the Kid (Richard Gere), a recluse drawn out of hiding; and Arthur Rimbaud (Ben Whishaw), a poet with transgressive appeal.

Neorealism to pursue a more subjective approach to moviemaking that revealed the interior world of his characters (epitomized by *8½*, which became a specific reference for *I'm Not There*). On the American side, they looked to experimental films from the 1970s, such as Richard Lester's *Petulia* (photographed by Nicolas Roeg) and counterculture Westerns like *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (shot by Conrad Hall, ASC), *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (photographed by Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC) and *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* (shot by John Coquillon).

Lachman and Haynes believed that the more the various looks could be built into the negative, the more authentic the picture would feel. They eventually opted to finish *I'm Not There* with the digital-intermediate (DI) process, in great part because the mixture of formats could have posed considerable difficulty in the photochemical world on a compressed post schedule. However, they committed to delineating the film's worlds by using different emulsions, formats, lighting, filtration, camera movement and framing techniques, rather than building the looks digitally after the fact.

For Dylan aficionados, the most familiar-looking portions of *I'm Not There* will be those concerning Jude (Blanchett), who looks like the Dylan who was the subject of D.A. Pennebaker's 1967 documentary *Dont Look Back*. According to Lachman, this section was chiefly inspired by Fellini's surreal, autobiographical *8½* (shot by Gianni di Venanzo), in which Marcello Mastroianni portrays an internationally renowned movie director who must look inward as fans, journalists and associates make increasingly stressful demands on him. "We specifically referenced the opening sequence of *8½*, when Marcello begins to feel claustrophobic and suffocated as he's caught in a traffic jam," the cinematographer says. "In our portrayal, we show Jude trapped in a similar situation."



Jude is then shown deflecting questions at a British press conference." For this sequence, Lachman grabbed shots of Blanchett quickly, turning his Moviecam Compact on and off with ramp-ups and flash-frames included to create the oppressive feeling of an attack, sometimes from Jude's POV. The overall impression is of an artist under siege. Outlining his motivation for this and other scenes, Haynes offers, "I was interested in the moment when Dylan was making the album *Blonde on Blonde*. His electric-guitar music was met with historic opposition from fans, and that fueled him further in the direction punk rockers later took: taunting the audience and trying to generate friction rather than adoration."

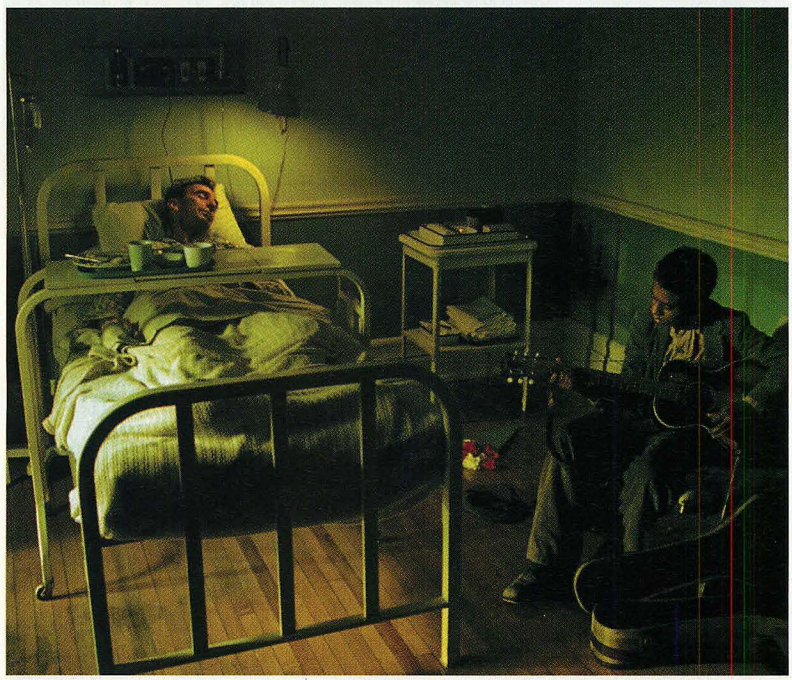
Lachman filmed Jude's story on Kodak Plus-X 5231 and Double-X 5222 black-and-white negative stocks. "I know the recent trend with black-and-white scenes in movies has been to shoot color and transform it into black-and-white through printing or DI techniques, but the thing I wanted to reference was the way films looked in the Sixties in terms of exposure, texture, grain and latitude," says Lachman. Working in black-and-white, he continues, is about more than just getting a monochromatic image. "Kodak hasn't improved those stocks. If I shoot Double-X in 2006, it's like shooting it back in the Sixties; it only has about 1½ stops of over- or underexposure. Also, they haven't T-grained it the way they have their color stocks.

"By shooting real black-and-white," he continues, "I was able to use the same methods cinematographers used then to selectively alter tones, like, say, using a Yellow 8, Orange 21, or Red 23A to introduce tonal separations. You can change some values if you use a DI to change color to black-and-white, but it doesn't feel or look the same in the values of tonal separation.

"By originating on black-and-





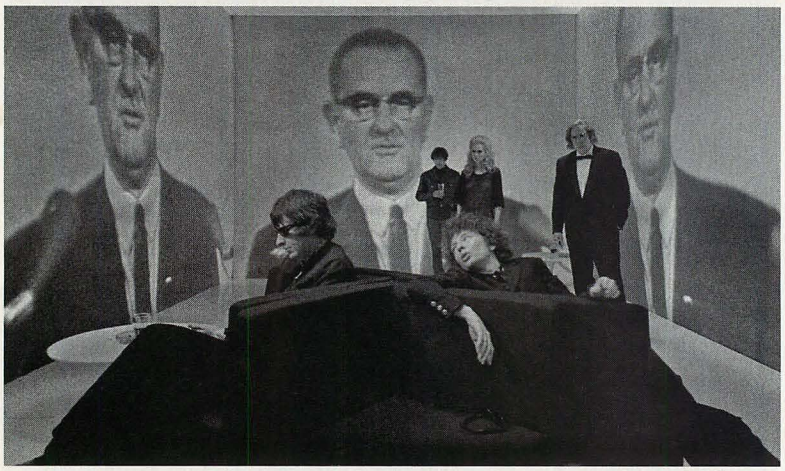


Top: After hitching a ride on a boxcar, Woody manages to charm a trio of tramps. Middle: The precociously talented boy entertains a suburban family with his music and tall tales. Bottom: Upon hearing that his folk idol, Woody Guthrie, has fallen ill, the boy rushes to his namesake's bedside.

Deconstructing Bob Dylan



The crew captures the cool vibe of Club Silver, where a beleaguered Jude attempts to escape the pressures of touring, only to find herself just as uncomfortable amid a crowd of pill-popping hipsters — and Big Brother-like projections of U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson. "I wanted Club Silver to reflect a visual sensibility that I find unique to the Sixties — the stark minimalism of these clean, austere, backlit screens," says Haynes.

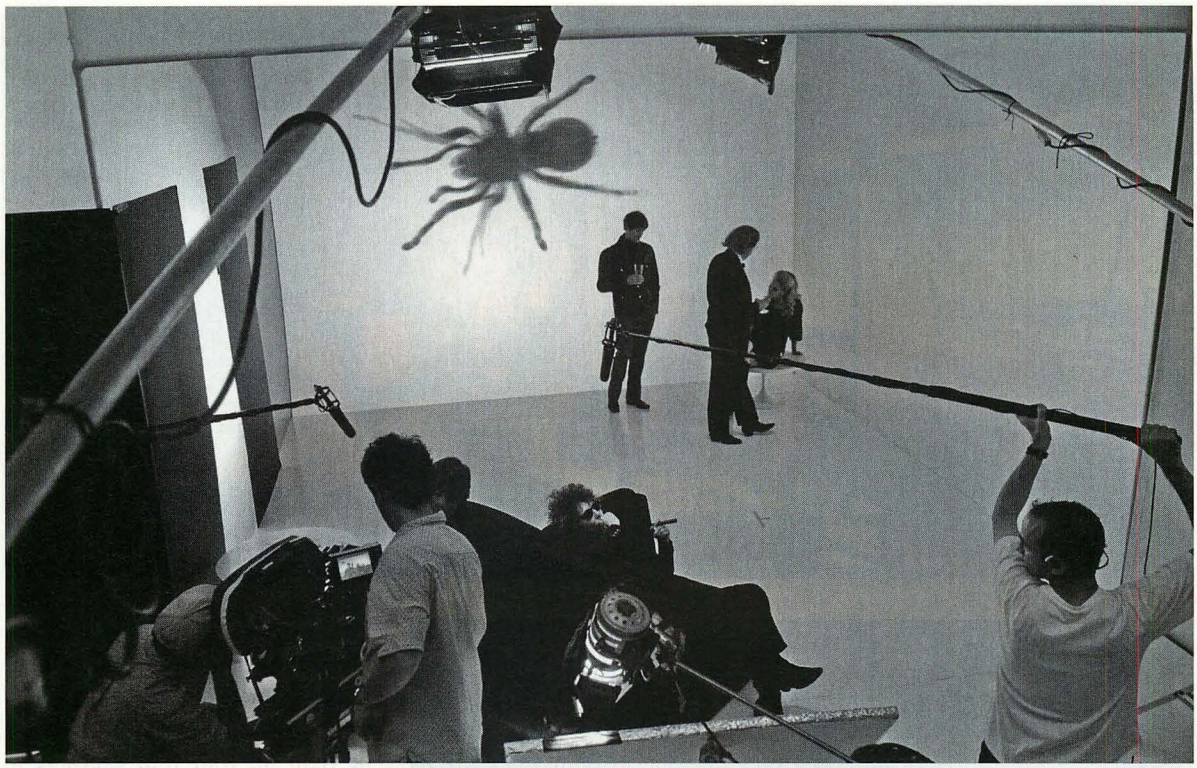


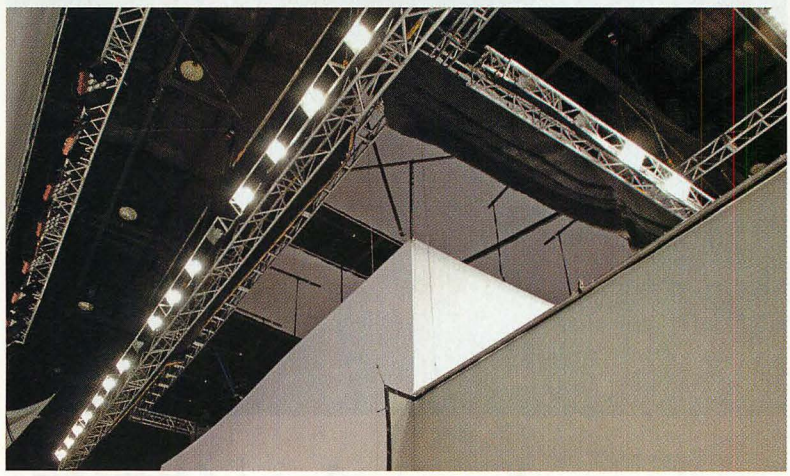


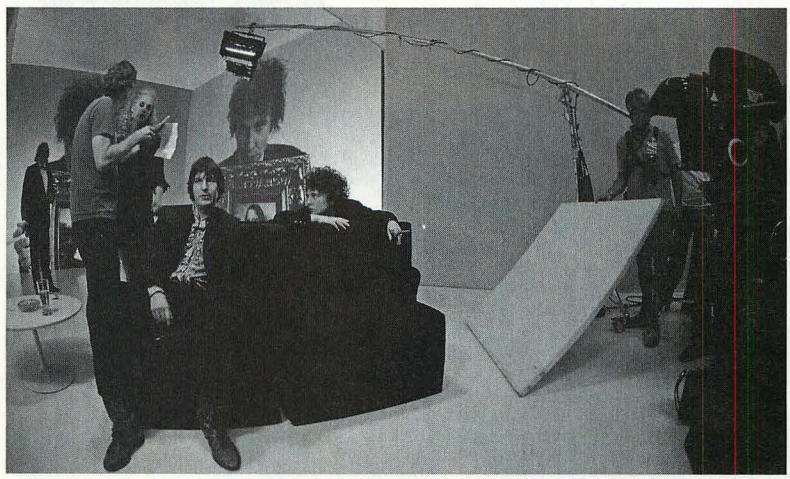
white emulsion, you're able to maintain a truer black-and-white look than if you shoot on color stock and convert the images to black and white," Lachman asserts. "This was confirmed to me by the colorist doing the final prints at Technicolor, Lee Wimer, who had encountered this problem while converting color to black-and-white on other projects. Apparently, when you do a DI, there can be additional color shifting from your original DI negative, especially when you're at the dupe-negative stage."

For interiors shot on black-and-white, Lachman also experimented with Tiffen's LLD filter, which is typically used for color photography in fading daylight when an 85 filter would lose too much exposure for daylight correction. The yellow LLD allows cinematographers to slightly warm up a shot without any stop loss; on *I'm Not There,* the filter enabled Lachman to create richer blacks on 200-ASA Double-X stock without losing stop.

The cinematographer also used vintage Cooke Panchro lenses,







Top: Synchronized rear projections lend subtle menace to the Club Silver sequence. Built within a 40'x40' warehouse in Montreal, the set featured walls made from a Spandex-type material attached to lightweight frames and connected at the seams. Middle: The Spandex walls were backlit with dimmer-controlled Nine-lights and Cyc strips bounced off large sheets of canvas-like material positioned behind the frames of Spandex. Bottom: Crew members add some fill light to the scene.

whose aged, warmer coatings acted as a slight filter, improving the contrast in the blacks. "I find that Panchros have less of the flat field properties of newer optics, and that adds to the movie's period feel," he says. "They concentrate more resolution in the center of the image than the corners. When those lenses were originally designed, they were intended to be more like portrait-style still lenses, which created a more pleasing, contoured look for faces."

Black-and-white footage was processed at Alpha Cine Labs in Seattle, and Lachman credits the lab's liaison, former color timer Bill Scott, as a great asset for his enthusiasm for the project and experience with black-and-white processing and printing. The cinematographer had the lab put random shots up on the analyzer, not for printing, but just to get a sense of where his exposure numbers were falling. The color negative for *I'm Not There* was processed at Deluxe Toronto, where Lachman had developed a relationship during production of *The Virgin Suicides*. He received reports of the

Deconstructing Bob Dylan



Top: Robby, an actor, finds himself increasingly alienated from his family as his career takes flight. Middle: Billy the Kid must sacrifice his hard-won anonymity as he confronts injustice in a small rural town. Bottom: Jack, a folk singer, abandons his celebrity to pursue a religious calling.



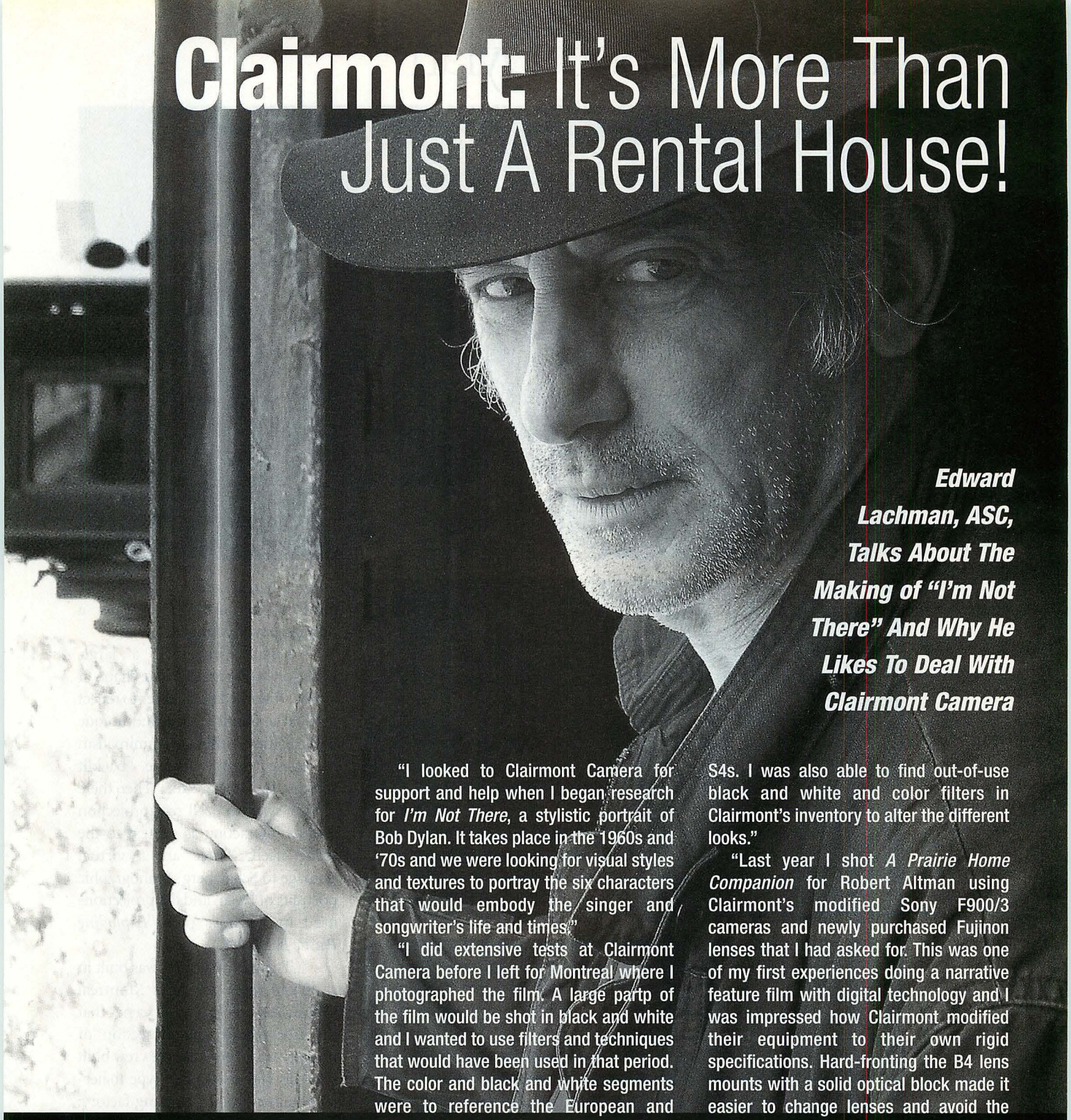


timing lights for both color and black-and-white work, but an accurate assessment of the latter was especially critical, he notes. "You have to be right on with your exposure in [black-and-white] because under- or overexposure can add significant grain," says Lachman. "I'm used to overexposing color negative for color saturation, but I couldn't do that in the black-and-white sections."

Lachman and his gaffer, John DeBlau, lit locations such as Jude's hotel room by augmenting practicals with small instruments. "It was very much 'black-and-white lighting,'" says Lachman. "We isolated people in the light more than I would have if I were shooting color."

Club Silver, the mod London nightclub where Jude escapes the stresses of touring at a chic and trendy party, presented one of the production's most significant lighting challenges. This sequence was inspired by a highly influential Volkswagen print campaign of the early 1960s. Lachman recalls, "That campaign was minimalistic — just the car against a white seamless background lit from one side. A lot of other ad campaigns picked that up at the time. Fashion and commercial photographers like Jerry Schatzberg were also lighting Dylan that way,

Clairmont: It's More Than Just A Rental House!



Edward Lachman, ASC, Talks About The Making of "I'm Not There" And Why He Likes To Deal With Clairmont Camera

"I looked to Clairmont Camera for support and help when I began research for *I'm Not There*, a stylistic portrait of Bob Dylan. It takes place in the 1960s and '70s and we were looking for visual styles and textures to portray the six characters that would embody the singer and songwriter's life and times."

"I did extensive tests at Clairmont Camera before I left for Montreal where I photographed the film. A large partp of the film would be shot in black and white and I wanted to use filters and techniques that would have been used in that period. The color and black and white segments were to reference the European and American styles of filmmaking then and I was able to use Clairmont's experience to those ends."

"I wanted to create varied genre looks and textures for the different characters. One of the ways we achieved this was by using different makes of lenses, i.e. Cooke Speed Panchros, K4 Canons, older H.S. Zeiss lenses and the newer Cooke S4s. I was also able to find out-of-use black and white and color filters in Clairmont's inventory to alter the different looks."

"Last year I shot *A Prairie Home Companion* for Robert Altman using Clairmont's modified Sony F900/3 cameras and newly purchased Fujinon lenses that I had asked for. This was one of my first experiences doing a narrative feature film with digital technology and I was impressed how Clairmont modified their equipment to their own rigid specifications. Hard-fronting the B4 lens mounts with a solid optical block made it easier to change lenses and avoid the problem of repeated back-focusing. Their specialized accessories also created a more filmic experience."

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Deconstructing Bob Dylan

Top: As Jude is pestered by a relentlessly inquisitive press, her life begins to resemble scenes from Fellini's surreal fantasy *8½*. Middle: The faces of Jude's tormentors take on the caricature-like qualities favored by Fellini, who began his career as a cartoonist. Bottom: In a restaging of a famous sequence from *8½*, Jude is trapped in a claustrophobic traffic jam, where she must endure gawkers in adjacent cars.







using a single source against lit or unlit backgrounds to create a dramatic, stylized image."

Haynes imagined a large, white-on-white space in the shape of a cube. "I wanted Club Silver to reflect a visual sensibility that I find unique to the Sixties — the stark minimalism of these clean, austere, backlit screens," says the director. "Then there are the synchronized rear-projection screens interacting as subtext to the scene itself. These are a virtual homage to Schatzberg's iconographic portraits of Dylan and the projections used in Warhol's piece *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*."

The minimalist set was built in a 40'x40' area inside a Montreal industrial warehouse. For scenes that did not require the projection of imagery onto the walls, the crew built set walls with a Spandex-type material obtained from a clothing factory; sheets of this material could be attached to thin-tube, lightweight frames and then connected to create a seamless-looking background, even in the corners. "We wanted to light the scene from behind these Spandex walls to make them look like one continuous surface, but the problem was that the material wasn't opaque



Like Fellini's Marcello, Jude imagines herself floating above the human fray, only to be reeled back to reality by a rope attached to her ankle.

enough to obscure our lighting sources," says Lachman. To solve this dilemma, key grip Michel Périard obtained sheets of a canvas-like material that's normally used to line gardens, driveways and swimming pools. "We placed this material in 40-by-60-foot frames positioned about 10 feet behind the Spandex walls," Lachman continues. "We could then illuminate these frames with dimmer-controlled Nine-lights and Cyc strips placed above and below each wall. The reflected light from our canvas frames would bounce back out through the Spandex walls to illuminate the club setting." Lachman wanted to have some control over this light, so he would only illuminate two "walls" at any given time — the wall behind the characters and one to the side.

Visual-effects supervisor Louis Morin put together the rear-screen portions of the scene. Morin offers, "I got in touch with Luc Desilets, who has worked for Cirque du Soleil and helped with the screen design of *Love*, the Las Vegas Beatles show." Desilets set up similar screens designed for rear-screen projection and lined up three Christie Roadster DS+25 projectors. Dataton Watchout software was used to "stitch" the three images together to prevent gaps and seams between them.

"The most stunning effect to me," says Morin, "was when we used one single image projected by the three projectors." This shot shows a tarantula moving from one side of the background to the other — a nod to Dylan's book of poetry, *Tarantula*. "We projected it as a single image the size of the three screens combined," adds Morin. "In order to get the 4:1 aspect ratio of the triptych of screens, we shot the macro photography of the spider on Double X negative in full-gate 35mm, scanned it as a 4K DPX file and then split that into three separate files, later using Watchout software to stitch them together."

As with all of the Jude sequences, Lachman shot Club Silver on Double-X negative. He let the white walls go about a stop and a half over, which was enough illumination to make them glow white while still maintaining some texture. He used Cooke Panchros for most of these shots, but switched to Zeiss Superspeeds for the rear-projection shots when the Panchros' maximum aperture of T2.3 wasn't wide enough. "I didn't want to push the Double-X," Lachman says. "It's already grainy enough, but I needed the extra stop with the high-speed lenses at T1.3 for the film to read the projection."

Perhaps the most abstract iter-

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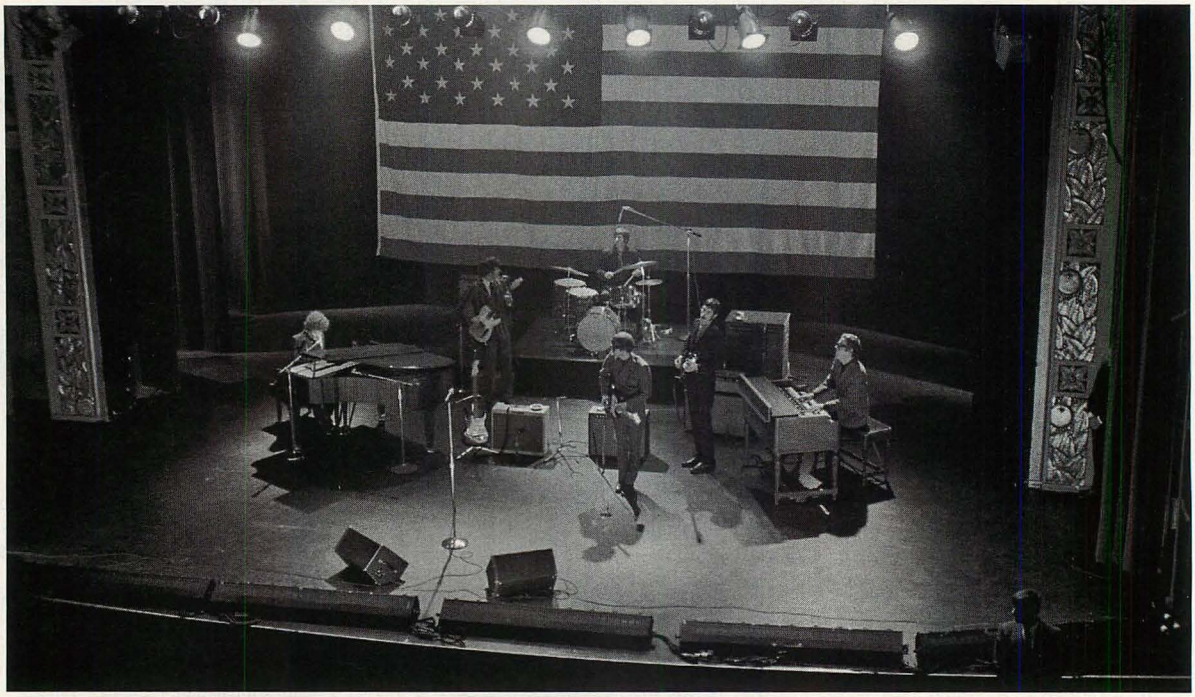
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Deconstructing Bob Dylan



Jude's confrontational posture reaches its apex in England, where she provokes catcalls from the audience — and a game of cat-and-mouse with the British press.



ation of the Dylan story in *I'm Not There* concerns the famous outlaw Billy the Kid (Gere). This storyline, shot in color on Kodak Vision2 500T 5218 and 250D 5205, shows the outlaw living in quiet exile in a small rural town. Soon he discovers that a corrupt politician is intent on exploiting the locals, and in his attempt to confront this injustice, Billy jeopardizes his carefully guarded reclusion.

The visual inspiration for this story came from the aforementioned revisionist, anti-hero Westerns of the late Sixties and early Seventies: *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* and *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* (in which Dylan played a supporting role). "Many of the cinematographers and directors working at that time were well-versed in commercial techniques," says Lachman. "They used longer lenses and made creative use of flares, backlighting and foregrounds with chocolate or coral filters."

For this section of the film, he used his Moviecam in conjunction with several-decades-old zooms from Angenieux and Cooke, as well as 300mm and 600mm Canon lenses. "Those cinematographers also experimented with a lot of zooms in their shots, and we really wanted to go for that visual grammar," Lachman adds.

Though he used some of the latest stocks for the color portions of *I'm Not There*, Lachman found himself using older lighting techniques to give these sections the desired feel. "I started this shoot in black-and-white, and I got into a rhythm of lighting for that with Fresnel and harder light. You tend to edgelight black-and-white for separation and contrast. You have to use harder and more directional light. Also, I used a bit of light for fill because of the narrower latitude of Plus-X and Double-X negative.

"It took some time for me to make the transition back to lighting for color. Our approach became emblematic of the way color was shot in the period we were trying capture. With today's emulsions, like 5218, I might just use a bounce card or no fill card at all; I can just let light fall off and still retain information in the shadow areas. But I was getting used to bouncing a bit of fill light in, and that subtly gives those scenes a look that's similar to a lot of what was being done in color cinematography

in the late Sixties and early Seventies with slower and more contrasty stocks."

We first meet Woody, the 11-year-old African-American boy, as he is riding boxcars like a Depression-era vagabond, although his story is set in the 1950s. Actually, Woody sounds more like someone living through the Depression — such as folk singer Woody Guthrie — than a child of the Fifties.

Woody is briefly cared for by a rural southern black family. "We wanted that story to have a traditional pastoral style," says Lachman, who adds that *Bound for Glory*, Hal Ashby's film about Guthrie (shot by Haskell Wexler, ASC), was a reference. This time he put Cooke S4 prime lenses on his Moviecam and used three Kodak emulsions: 5205 and Vision 200T 5274 and 500T 5279. "I wanted a warm look against the green vegetation, so I was looking for filters that would bring out the verdant quality of the landscape. I settled on Tiffen Straw in Half and Full gradations. That warmed up flesh tones and gave the yellows and greens the look I was going for."

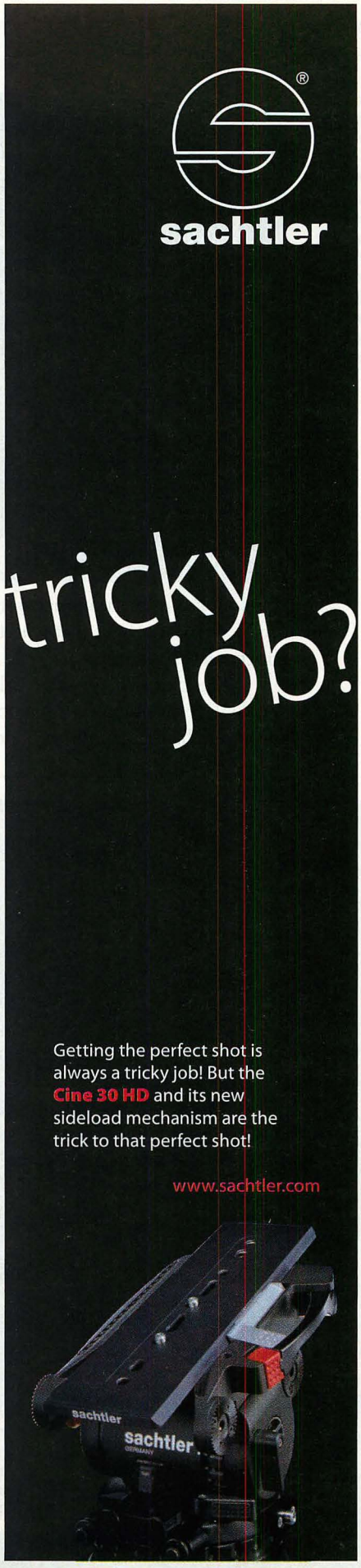
Another home Woody is taken into looks like something out of a *Look* magazine spread. There, he relays his hopes and dreams to the family in their living room, a scene that gave Haynes and Lachman a chance to revisit the pristine domesticity of *Far From Heaven*. "We didn't have to do much set dressing at all," notes Lachman. "We shot the house almost as we found it. You can find locations outside of Montreal that look as though they haven't been touched since the Fifties!"

He enhanced the color-temperature difference between the cool exterior light and the warm interior practicals by lighting through the windows with 12K HMI Pars gelled with Lee HT063 Pale Blue. The exterior units were aimed through real tree branches outside the windows to create sharp patterns on the wall. The warm interior lighting was provided by 150- and 300-watt mushroom bulbs on dimmers.

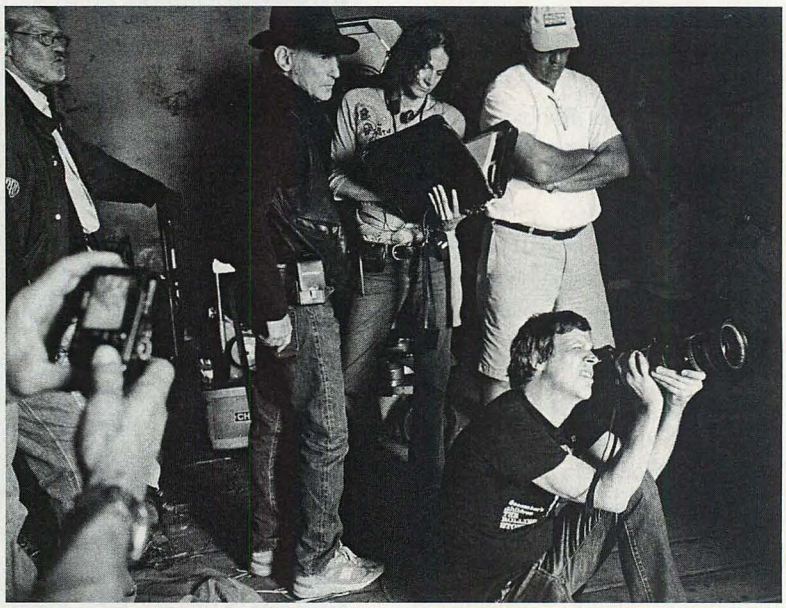
The story of Robbie (Ledger) and Claire (Charlotte Gainsbourg) tracks their relationship from their early-1960s courtship, when Robbie is a rising young actor, to the dissolution of their marriage a decade later, after he has become a movie star. The excitement of their early romance in the streets and cafés of New York is presented as something of an homage to the French New Wave, specifically Godard. The filmmakers made use of real locations and available light and used unmotivated camera movement and unbalanced framing to create a feeling of randomness that Godard explored in films such as *Masculine-Feminine* (shot by Willy Kurant, ASC, AFC). "Godard's compositions in that film are not always motivated by the characters' actions," notes Lachman. "The compositions create a logic of their own, based on Godard's ideology and storytelling."

Lachman shot Robbie's story on Kodak's older Vision stocks (5279 and 5274), mixing tungsten light, fluorescent light and daylight to create a naturalistic feel. He used Canon K4 lenses, still-photography lenses Canon adapted for cine use in the 1980s. "They have a special quality," says the cinematographer, who recalls using them on *Desperately Seeking Susan*. "They aren't as multicoated as modern lenses and tend to flare in strong highlights, and the glass is colder in feeling." This, he adds, gives the scenes a look reminiscent of many French color films from the '60s, which often have a cooler visual tone.

For a scene showing young Robbie and Claire in a New York diner, Lachman framed the two so that they didn't always seem to be the subject of their own shots; he accomplished this effect by using a mirror behind the actors, deliberately disorienting the viewer and introducing



Deconstructing Bob Dylan

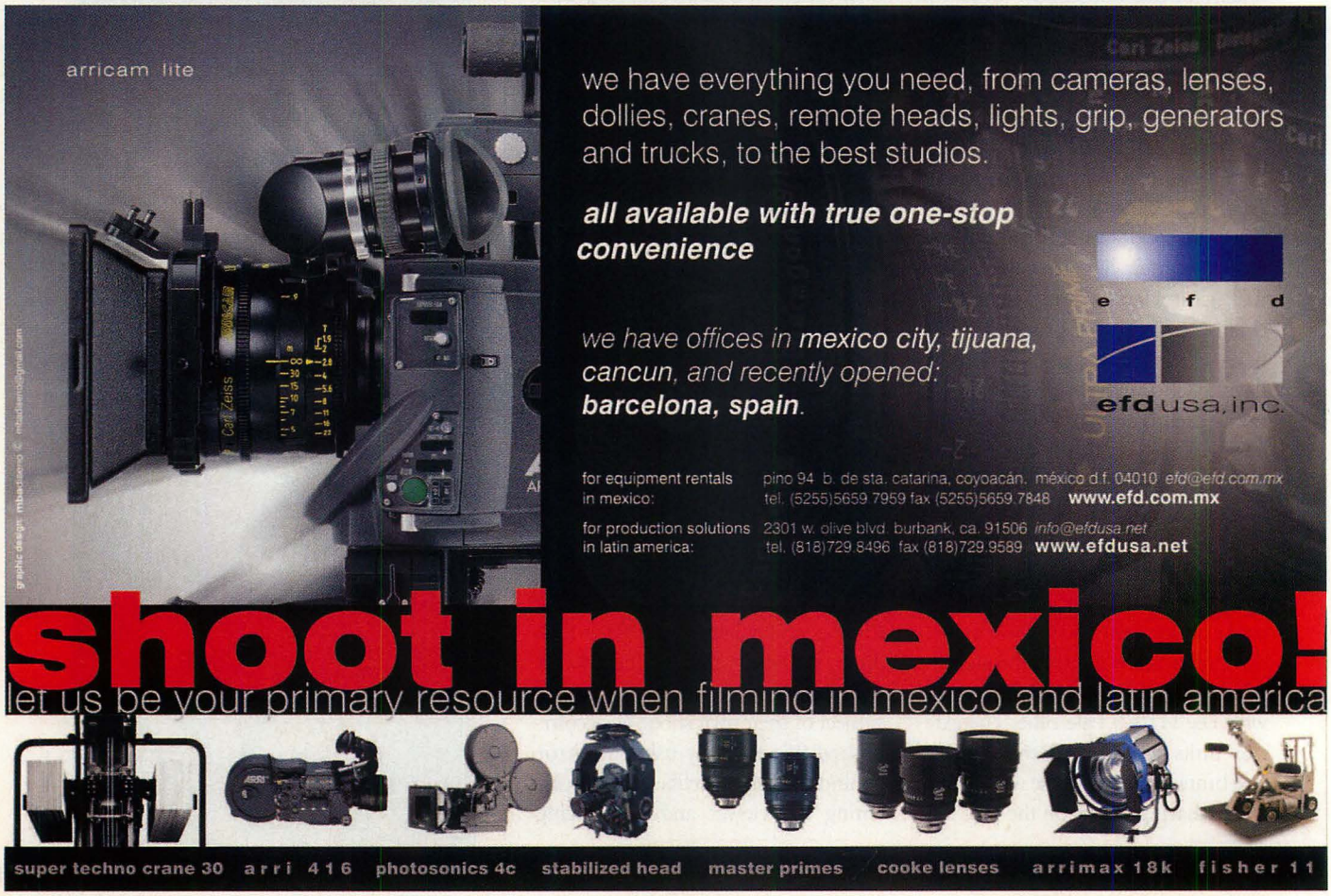


Lachman (center, in fedora) eyeballs a setup while Haynes (lower right) makes his assessment through a lens. At far left is gaffer John DeBlau, who retired after the project wrapped.

shifts in screen direction that would create an awkwardness that reflected the characters' emotions.

The character of Jack (Bale), the popular musician who abandons the limelight to become the born-again preacher Rev. John, captures the Dylan who essentially did just that in the mid-1970s. Shot on Super 16mm in a documentary style, this storyline allowed Lachman to revisit some of the environments he saw while working on *Say Amen, Somebody*, George Nierenberg's acclaimed documentary about the origins of gospel music. He shot Rev. John's singing and preaching to a small congregation inside an assembly hall and lit the performance with the same type of makeshift theatrical lighting you would find in such a location — theatrical mushroom bulbs and Par 36 cans over the stage — mixed with overhead daylight fluorescents in the hall.

Lachman filmed this sequence on Kodak Vision 500T 7279 using a vintage Aaton LTR with older Cooke 10.4-52mm and Angenieux 11.5-138mm zoom lenses. He composed for the 2.40:1 aspect ratio so the footage would match the Super 35mm portions of the film. "We created our new markings on the ground glass off our video tap," he explains. "It was rudimentary, but it worked."



The DI was carried out at Cinebyte in Toronto with colorist Drake Conrad. "We had stock footage, color, black-and-white, Super 8, 16mm and 35mm, and in the end, due to time limitations, we had to merge it all with a DI," says Lachman. "Cinebyte scanned the negative at 2K using a Northlight scanner without any kind of grain suppression — Todd and I wanted the grain to be an element of the texture of each story.

"Cinebyte was very committed to the project and did great work," he continues. "It took about two weeks to do the grading and two weeks to do the filmout, which was done on an Arrilaser. I was worried about the black-and-white getting a kind of tinted look in the prints, because everything was being printed onto color stock. But I was very pleased that the look didn't shift in the original negative. It shifted very slightly in the dupe neg, but even there it was closer to black-and-white than I ever thought it could be."

The grade was carried out using Filmlight's Baselight color-correction system. "Todd didn't really want to use any Power Windows," says Lachman. "There are a few, but we really didn't use the DI to make many big changes to what was already on the negative."

The cinematographer notes that the unusual production was made possible by "the very creative, supportive and hard-working I.A. crew we had in Montreal, where we shot the film." He mentions 2nd-unit cinematographer Sylvaine Dufaux, 1st AC Nico Marion and key grip Périard, and singles out DeBlau, a longtime collaborator who retired after wrapping the project. "I was honored to work with John one last time; he has always helped me create solutions out of problems, and has the rare ability to help everyone else as well. I always feel that the crew I work with is as important as I am in creating the images on the screen." ■

TECHNICAL SPECS

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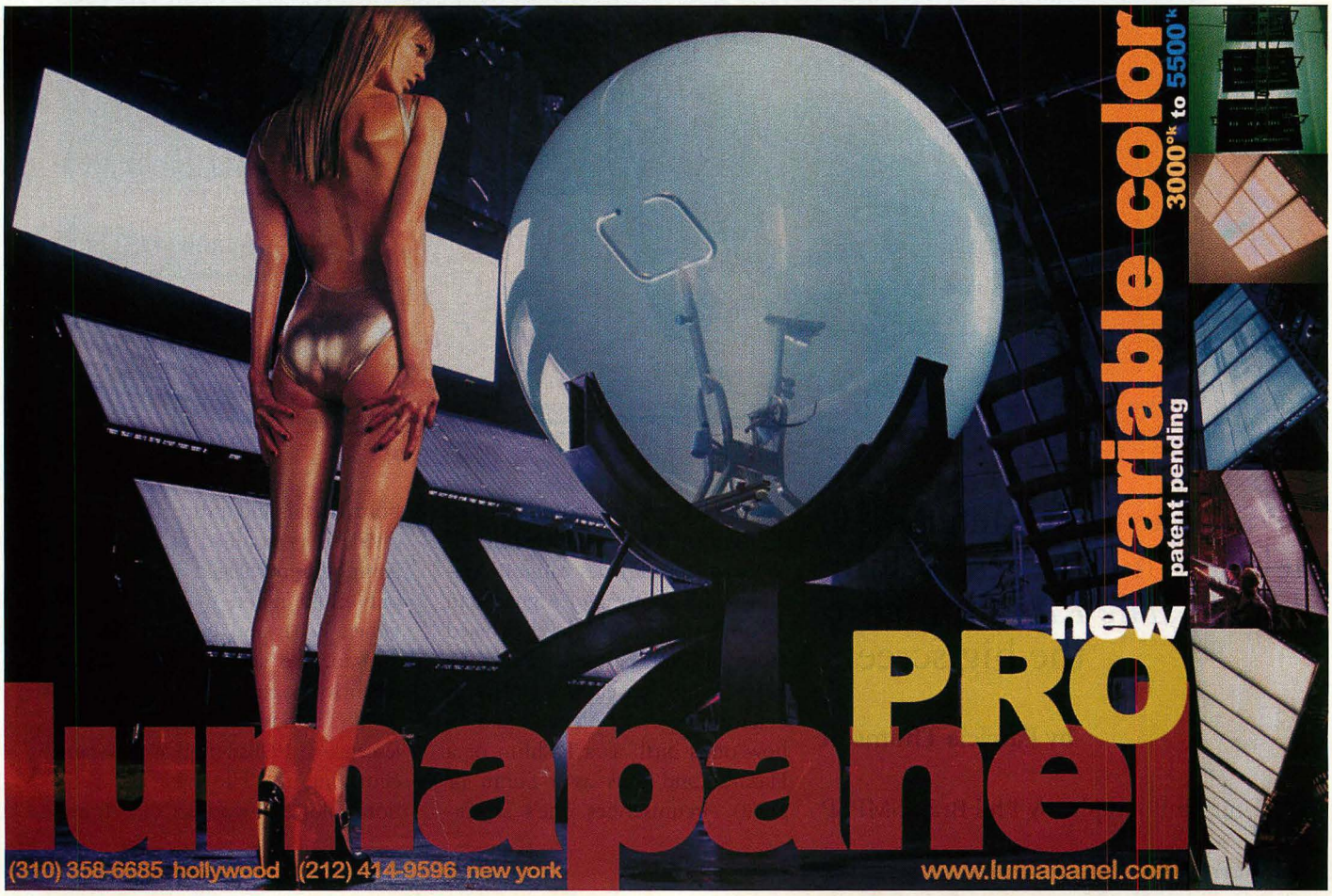
Moviecam Compact; Aaton LTR

Cooke, Angenieux, Canon lenses

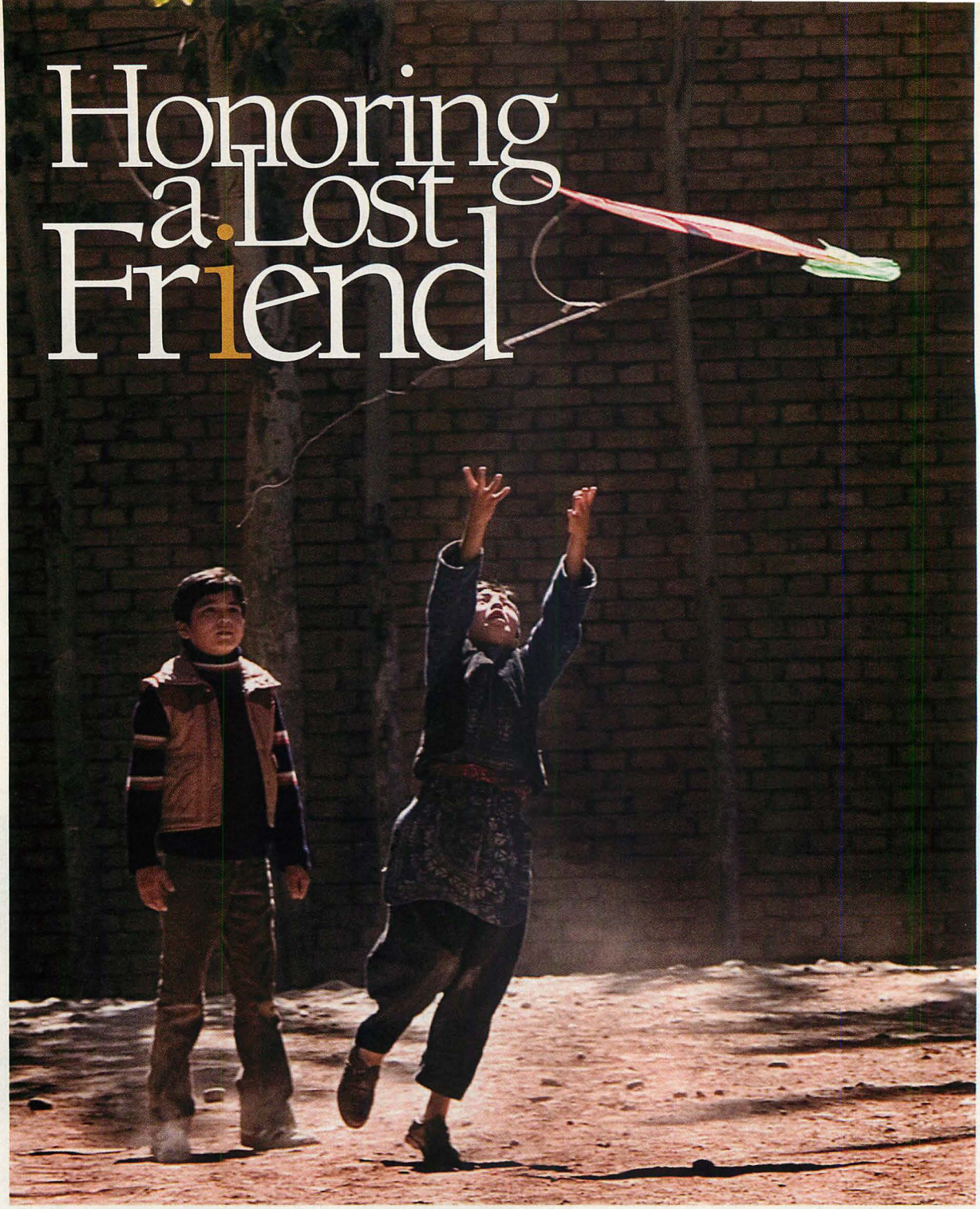
Kodak
Plus-X 5231, Double-X 5222;
Vision 200T 5274, 500T 5279/7279;
Vision2 200T 5217, 250D 5205, 500T 5218

Digital Intermediate

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Honoring a Lost Friend



Roberto Schaefer, ASC helps bring the best-selling novel *The Kite Runner* to the big screen.

by Patricia Thomson

Unit photography by Phil Bray, SMPSP

In 371 pages, the novel *The Kite Runner* does what reams of newspaper articles cannot: convey the dilemma of Afghanistan on an emotional level. Khaled Hosseini's 2003 best seller shows the heavy hand that ethnicity plays in determining every Afghan's fate — how one's birth as a Pashtun or a Hazara (and thus as a Sunni or Shi'a) circumscribes one's aspirations, friends and future. This ethnic divide is personified by two boys: Amir, the privileged narrator, an only child raised by his widower father, Baba; and his close friend, Hassan, the servant's son and a minority Hazara.

The novel recounts their adolescence in 1970s Kabul, its first part climaxing in a kite-flying competition followed by an act of betrayal

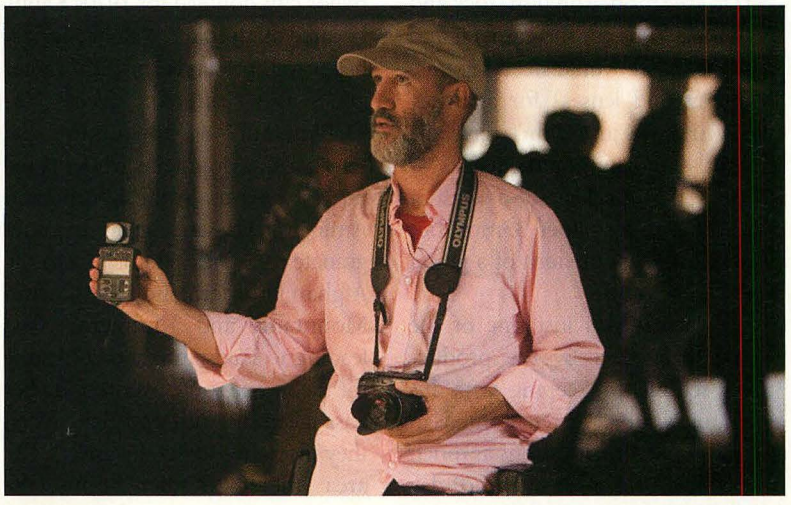


Opposite: Amir (Zekiria Ebrahimi, left), a son of privilege, forms a boyhood bond with Hassan (Ahmad Khan Mahmoodzada), the son of a family servant, in *The Kite Runner*. This page, left: The friends share a moment at their beloved pomegranate tree. Below: Director of photography Roberto Schaefer, ASC takes a meter reading.

that forever alters their relationship. The story then skips ahead to San Francisco, where an adult Amir and his father have relocated after the Soviet invasion. There, Amir marries and launches a successful career as a novelist. Then one day, he receives a call from his father's best friend, Rahim Khan, who is dying in Pakistan. He tells Amir to come, and Amir, haunted by guilt, obeys. But he soon discovers Khan has a hidden agenda: Hassan and his wife have been murdered, and Amir must find their son, who is in an orphanage, and bring him to safety in Pakistan. Amir makes a perilous journey into his homeland, now completely altered by war and the Taliban, as he attempts this act of redemption.

"I think of the film as an intimate epic," says director Marc Forster, who recruited his longtime cinematographer, Roberto Schaefer, ASC, to bring *Kite Runner* to the big screen. Schaefer has shot all eight of Forster's features, starting with *Loungers* (1995) and continuing through the upcoming James Bond film, now in production. Their collaborations include the Oscar winners *Monster's Ball* and *Finding Neverland*, and the cinematographer notes that genre-jumping has been the pattern. "Marc likes to try different things," says Schaefer. "Before *Kite Runner*, he kept saying he wanted to do a science-fiction movie, and we both wanted to do a Western." So Westerns were on their mind when *The Kite Runner* came up, and when they began discussing the project, Schaefer suggested viewing Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West* to determine a visual strategy. "That meant widescreen, big close-ups with deep imagery, and camera moves and scene blocking based on the feeling of a big Western," says Schaefer.

The filmmakers originally intended to shoot anamorphic 2.40:1 — "I even stopped in Germany to test Hawk lenses, which I loved," says Schaefer — but then they saw the locations, most of which were in a remote corner of China and comprised small rooms.



Photos courtesy of Paramount Vantage.

Honoring a Lost Friend



Various locations in China doubled as Kabul, Afghanistan, for scenes set in the 1970s.

"In light of the travel and the very tight spaces … I eventually decided anamorphic would be a bit restrictive," says Schaefer. "But I thought we could split it up and shoot anamorphic for the wide exteriors and spherical when we got in tighter; we knew we were finishing with a digital intermediate [DI], which would facilitate that. But when we decided to go spherical, production immediately said we should shoot 3-perf to save money on film stock and get longer runs on the camera, and that meant we would need separate [cameras and lenses] for anamorphic. And we just didn't have the budget — or room on the trucks — to carry both packages. So we shot the whole thing Super 35mm, but we tried to keep the idea of a grand epic."

Format was just one of the elements affected by the production's setting. In keeping with his previous work, Forster wanted to shoot on practical locations as much as possible, and most of the 70-day shoot took place in China's high desert. "It was very important to me to tell the story in the most authentic way possible," says the director. "Knowing where these characters come from and how they live is the only way you can understand them and their culture deep, deep down." (For reasons of security, shooting in Afghanistan was out of the question.)

Kashgar, China's westernmost major city, doubled for 1970s Kabul. Located on the old Silk Road, the city has a well-preserved historic center and also offered access to Tashkurgan, a town in the Karakorum Mountains whose stone fortress appears in the film behind Amir and Hassan's beloved pomegranate tree. Only 60 miles from the Afghan border, the Karakorum Mountains and Khunjerab Pass leading to Pakistan could substitute for the escape route over the Khyber Pass taken by Amir and Baba when they flee the Soviet invasion. The area offered another bonus: the Uighur, an ethnic Islamic minority, "bear a fair resemblance to the Afghani," says Schaefer, and could play minor parts.

Filming in the area created a number of headaches. After getting permits from the central government in Beijing, the filmmakers had to deal with two different bureaucracies in Kashgar: Chinese and Uighur. Forster recalls, "These were always group decisions, so an individual would not say no, and at the end no one said yes. So we were often stuck in waiting mode." Then there were the living conditions. "Except in Beijing, we were in very basic, often unhygenic living situations," recalls Schaefer. "At the hotel in Kashgar, I was lucky because my toilet didn't overflow or leak, and I didn't get the sewage smell coming up through the floor until toward the end of our stay." When filming in Tashkurgan, most of the crew slept in Yurts. "It's not everybody's thing to go to Kashgar for a few months," says Forster with a laugh. "The conditions

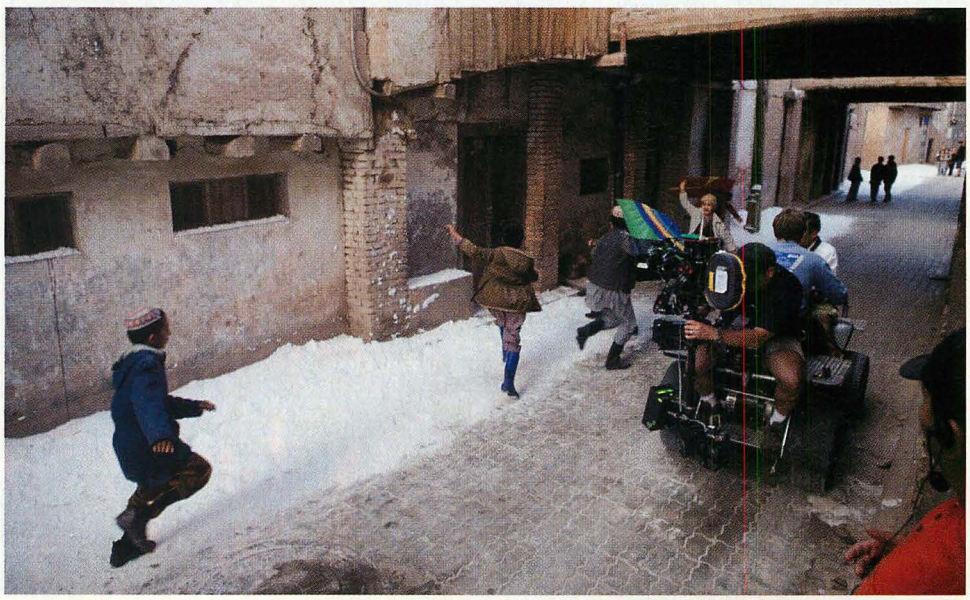


Left: A group of children prepare to sail a kite. Below: Crewmembers roll with the camera to capture the scene. The small electric dolly car, provided by Grip Trix, proved particularly effective — and quiet — in Kashgar's narrow alleyways.

were very hard, and most of the [crew] who wanted to come were world travelers." The international crew and cast included Chinese, Afghani, Americans, British, Iranians, Australians, South Africans, French, Italians and Japanese.

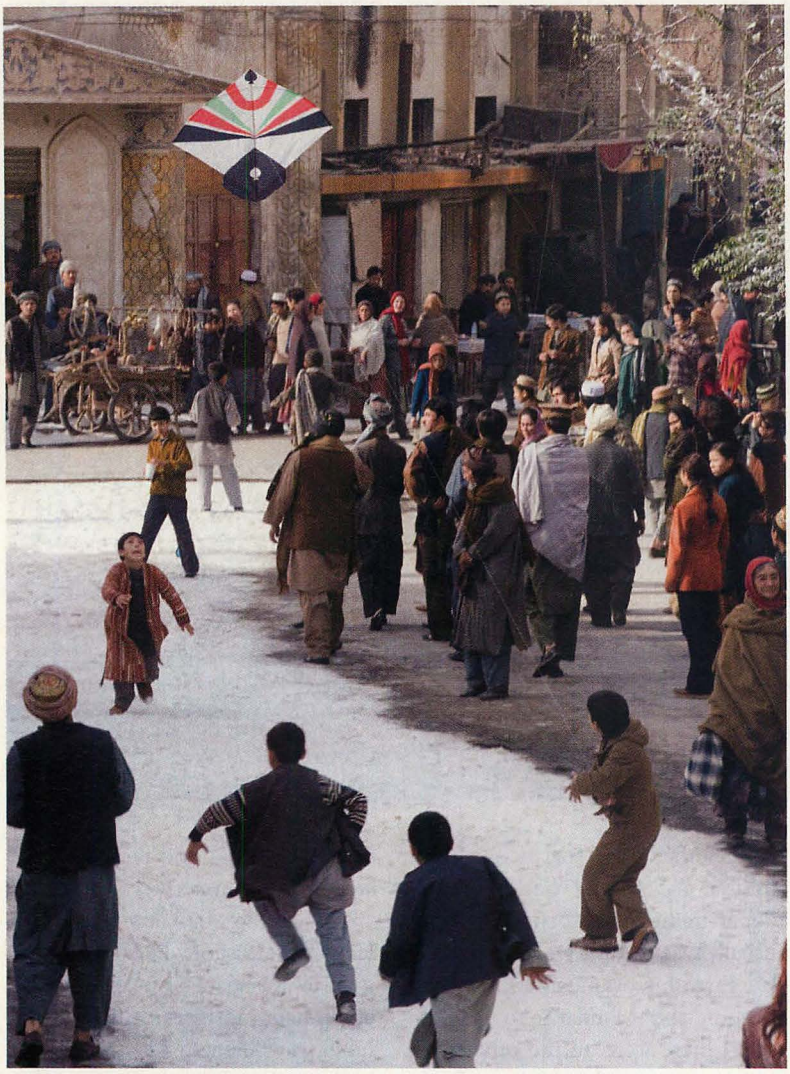
Schaefer's key crew came from the States. Key grip Herb Ault, gaffer Ian Kincaid and their assistants had all worked with *Kite Runner* producer Bennett Walsh on *Kill Bill* in Beijing. "They knew the [Chinese] system as much as anybody," says Schaefer. The cinematographer also brought in A-camera /Steadicam operator Jim McConkey, a longtime collaborator. "The Chinese do amazing work — they're dedicated and incredibly hard-working — but their style is mass attack," says Schaefer. "They work in droves." Forster adds, "If you'd use one person in America, you'd use three or four for the same thing in China. There are so many people there, and many of them are willing to work for $3 a day, so they're not used to one person handling something." That necessitated translators, "at least one for every department," says Schaefer, "and usually two, because we had to translate English to Mandarin, English to Uighur, and Mandarin to Uighur. Then there were all the other languages that would sneak in — Farsi, Pashtun, Dari. Offhand I remember eight translators, and I'm sure there were some I never saw."

Schaefer had his own challenges, not least of which was getting gear to Kashgar. Grip and electric equipment mostly came from rental houses in Beijing, while the camera package came from Arri's new office in Australia. "Everything we got was



Honoring a Lost Friend

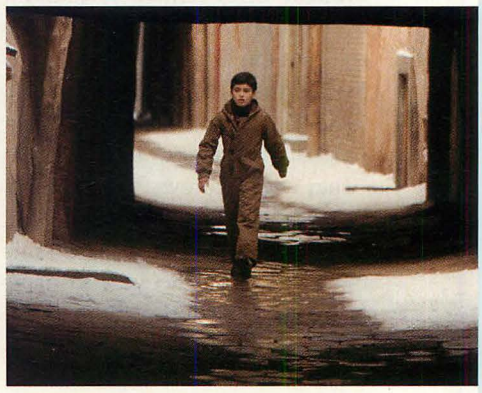
Right: Amir and Hassan send their kite into the sky. Scenes depicting the main kite competition, shot over two days, were complicated by changing light conditions. Below: Amir exults in his moment of triumph. Far right: Amir is estranged from his friend after an ugly incident.





brand new," says Schaefer. That included an Arricam Studio and Lite, an Arri 235, Arri Master Primes, an Arri 15.5-45mm zoom, and Angenieux Optimo 24-290mm and 18-70mm zooms, "which cut really beautifully with the Master Primes," he notes.

Last-minute one-day rentals were out of the question, so careful planning was critical during Schaefer's 12 weeks of prep. The production also had to contend with a long turnaround for dailies, seven days to 2½ weeks. During the first two weeks of production, 35mm dailies came from Beijing Film & Video Laboratory, a new, Kodak-supervised facility. "We were really their first customer, and they did excellent work, really clean," notes Schaefer. For the rest of the shoot, the filmmakers screened video dailies generated by LaserPacific in Los Angeles, which had to be flown to Beijing, then to Urumqi, then to Kashgar. "You can't fly directly into Kashgar — the government won't allow it," says Schaefer. "I eventually worked out a system with the telecine colorist at LaserPacific, Bruce Goodman. As he was doing the grading, he'd post stills on an FTP site, so I could see them as he was doing them. Then I could post digital stills showing my corrections using Gamma & Density's 3cP. Bruce would look at those and then post his corrected stills. The system worked well. Fortunately, we had Internet access most of the time,



although power went out occasionally at the hotel."

To keep things simple, Schaefer worked with only three film stocks, all from Kodak's Vision2 family: 100T 5212, 200T 5217 and 500T 5218. "It wasn't easy to get the film sent out to us," he says. "Occasionally we'd run out of stock at 11 a.m. and have to wait for our shipment to come in from the airport!"

For 1970s Kabul, "the color palette was driven by the real colors in Kabul: they wear and decorate their interiors with bright colors, but the exteriors are all sand-washed," says Schaefer. "So we decided the boys' childhood would be rich and saturated, very normal-feeling. Amir's whole adult life is less saturated, less colorful. When he goes back to Afghanistan, the same places you saw when he was a child are noticeably brought down, an effect we achieved with production design and in the DI at LaserPacific. We decided to differentiate the periods mainly through camera movement and color grading, because we wanted the differentiation to be subtle."

Throughout the shoot, production "was extremely good with the camera department," he states. "We had 30-foot MovieBird, which is like a Technocrane, the whole time, and it came with a technician." The production also carried a Felix crane, which the crew ably transported to difficult spots, including a hilltop cemetery outside of Tashkurgan, an 11,800' elevation. "The Chinese crew will take anything anywhere," says the cinematographer. "They carried the Felix up those steps, assembled it overnight, and laid down track so we could dolly it.

"The only thing I compromised on was construction cranes and Condors," he continues. "There was a dearth of Condors in China. Instead, they had one-man buckets, like cherry-pickers. That restricted our lighting a bit, especially on high floors. And since we didn't have construction cranes to fly big silks, we tried to work the schedule around the sun and used smaller silks — 20-bys, 12-bys and negatives. On the bigger exteriors, there's nothing you can do; you just try to plan your day in an intelligent way to get the right light at the right time."



The adult Amir (Khalid Abdalla) shares his kite-flying expertise with his old friend's son, Sohrab (Ali Danish Bakhtyari).

A few key items were brought from the States, including a Hustler dolly and an electric dolly car made by Grip Trix, a small ATV loaded with plates and mounts. The latter proved particularly effective in Kashgar's narrow alleyways. Various scenes have children running through the ancient streets of Kabul and its outdoor markets. For tracking shots there, a Steadicam was attached to the electric dolly. "Because we were shooting sound in those narrow alleys, we didn't want noisy gas motors running through there," says Schaefer. The All-Terrain E-ATD electric dolly was also used to track Baba driving his Mustang with the kids hanging out the window. "It's the size of a golf cart but can go a lot faster," notes Schaefer. "It has off-road tires and super-strong suspension. It worked great."

Kashgar's maze-like center was the location for the kite tournament, an all-day affair in which children fly their kites like weapons, using the glass-coated kite strings to cut down their opponents. "Kite runners" dash to retrieve the felled kites, and the final defeated kite is considered the ultimate prize. In the film, the competition comes down to a duel between Amir and Hassan and another duo. The scene was shot over two days — one for each team — and, as it happened, the first day was sunny with dappled clouds, and the next was cloudy throughout. "It was extremely complicated," recalls Schaefer. "We tried to arrange it chronologically so there would be a logic to the sun's position. Because the competition is supposed to take place over an entire day, we didn't worry so much about the light changing in the square." Thanks to that bit of sun on the second day, he adds, the matching ended up being "fairly close."

In addition to ground action, the kite tournament includes aerial perspectives of the city and spectators — the kites' POV, in effect. This involved a number of elements, including three days of greenscreen photography of kite flyers and spectators on rooftops, taken at extreme angles. To capture plates for the visual-effects department, the producers brought in a Flying-Cam, partly because the Chinese government

Honoring a Lost Friend



Right: A 30' MovieBird crane proved its worth throughout production. Below: The crew illuminates the exterior of house on location.

allows only military personnel to use helicopters. Hovering at 300', the Flying-Cam carried a Canon EOS 1DS Mark II that captured overlapping, 16-megapixel stills of the Kashgar streets, creating a 360° bubble of high-resolution coverage. In addition to these digital shots, the visual-effects team used some satellite images from Google Earth, whose "image quality is better in some places than others," says Schaefer. "It depends on the satellite and what level of detail [that government] will let you see."

Despite *The Kite Runner*'s classic style, it did present Forster with a few novel opportunities. One was a fight scene, when Amir meets an old foe at the Taliban compound where Hassan's son is being held. "I haven't shot a lot of fight scenes," says Schaefer, "and when I did, they always had a stunt guy." This time, the production had a Chinese stunt coordinator but no action-unit director. "Marc and I did everything, and it was all with principals, never stand-ins," says the cinematographer. "So it was always a question of how realistic the fight scene could be without [harming] the actors. I think the fight scene is very realistic and very painful; I like the fact that it's not cut every two frames, and it's not all whipped handheld. You see the punch and feel the hit. I think it worked out really well."



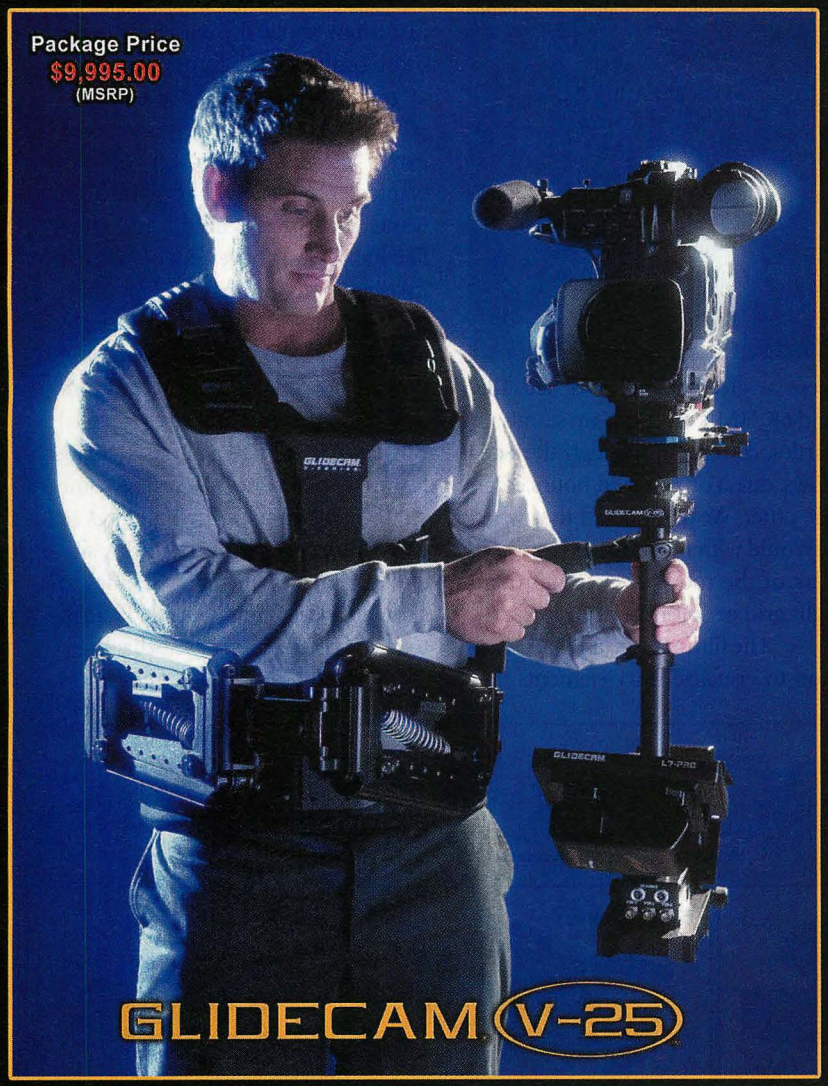
During prep, Schaefer and Forster broke this scene down in their usual method. "First we make or get blueprints of every location and set, then we sit down for six to eight hours a day for weeks and go through the script with the diagrams," explains Schaefer. "Marc shows me how he wants the dialogue to progress, where he wants the actors to move. I'll draw them in, then plan out the shots, figuring it

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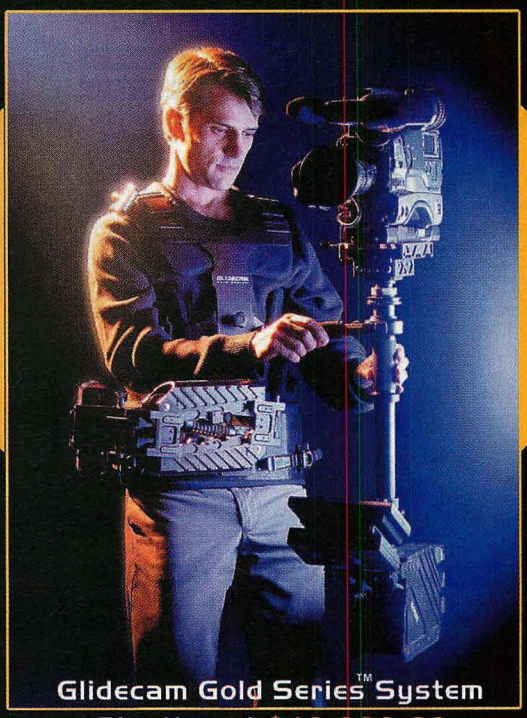
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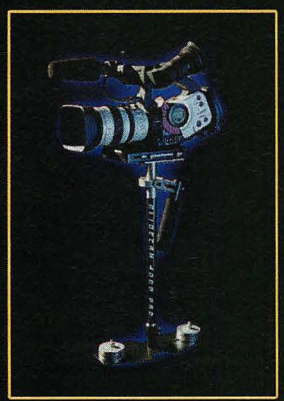


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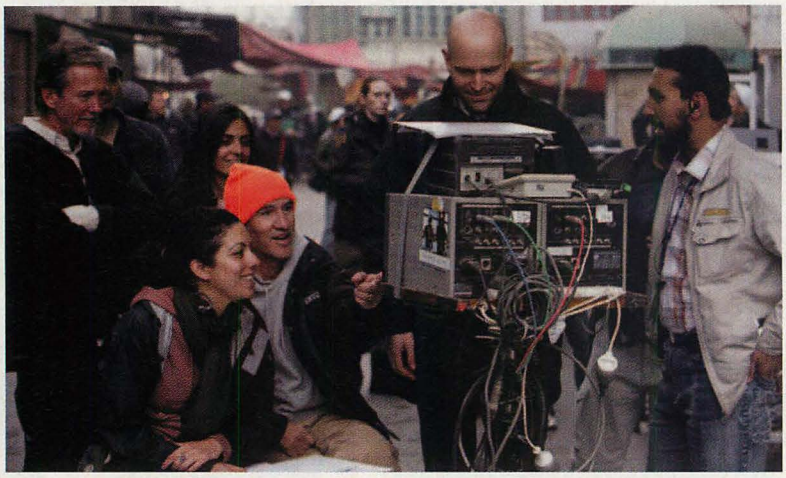
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Director Marc Forster (second from right) examines a scene on a monitor while Schaefer (in orange cap) comments.

out in script order. That way I know the flow — how I want the camera to move, what kinds of angles, keeping a continuity in the flow of visuals to match the story." After working the fight scene out on paper, Schaefer had to adapt the plan to the location, a desert outpost. The compound interior had to be lit through windows because of its low ceilings. "We were at ground level and had 18K and 6K HMIs on crank-up stands, or turtles, coming in through the windows, direct on one side, bounced on the other. We augmented that when we could with HMIs tucked into corners of the room bounced through light grid or soft frost diffusion."

The filmmakers also had occasion to visualize story elements that weren't as effectively conveyed by the book. The Soviet invasion, for instance, makes a far greater impact visually, even though it's rendered in just a few shots. To make the scene more ominous, the filmmakers set it at night. (This strategy also helped sell the explosions and required fewer extras and less CG work.) Schaefer wanted to go as dark as possible. "I wanted it to feel realistic, and cities like Kabul don't have a lot of electricity even in good times. At nighttime, it's *dark*, and when the Russians invade, all the shops are closed down." For this sequence, 2nd-unit director of photography Richard Bowen, ASC filmed soldiers walking toward the camera. "We placed some strategic lighting on the buildings so you could see the soldiers, mostly single-tube fluorescents and Blondes to simulate streetlights, but we wanted to keep it menacing," says Schaefer.

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rolling in, they created a composite. "We shot a reference street plate in Kashgar at night by existing light, then we shot one Russian tank rolling past us on an abandoned airstrip outside San Francisco. I lit that with two rows of Blondes, about 30 total, on Avenger or Mambo Combo stands to simulate the street lighting from the plate. Then the visual-effects team recreated much of the street and replicated the tank from our single pass to make it look like a row of tanks rumbling down a Kabul street. We also picked off some close-ups of the tank and soldiers on that pass to use as separate shots. Jim McConkey and Simon Jayes, the B-camera operator in San Francisco, got some really good shots of boots in puddles, reflections and tank treads, as well as silhouettes of soldiers."

That scene was one instance where the T1.3 Arri Master Primes proved their worth. "I fell in love with them," says Schaefer. "They're not as cold, clinical and flat-sharp as Zeiss Ultra Primes; they have more of a curved focal plane, more like the Cooke S4s. If I'd shot with Cookes, which I was originally going to do, I would've had to carry a set of Superspeeds for those times when I needed the extra stop. But the Master Primes open to a T1.3 and stay sharp even wide open. Plus, it's easy to change lenses because they're all basically the same size. And they're not heavy, so they're good on a Steadicam."

Schaefer only occasionally used diffusion on the lens, a Tiffen Classic Soft filter, "but we did use a lot of atmosphere. In China there are no restrictions on what you can pump into a room. In fact, we used diesel fuel for a scene featuring a burning village. The special-effects guy wanted to fill the whole place with tires and set them on fire, but we talked him out of it!"

Looking back on the production, Schaefer notes that adapting a popular book is "always a crapshoot, and it's almost impossible to come out on the plus side. But *The Kite Runner* is such a wonderful story. When I read the script, it really got me." ■

TECHNICAL SPECS

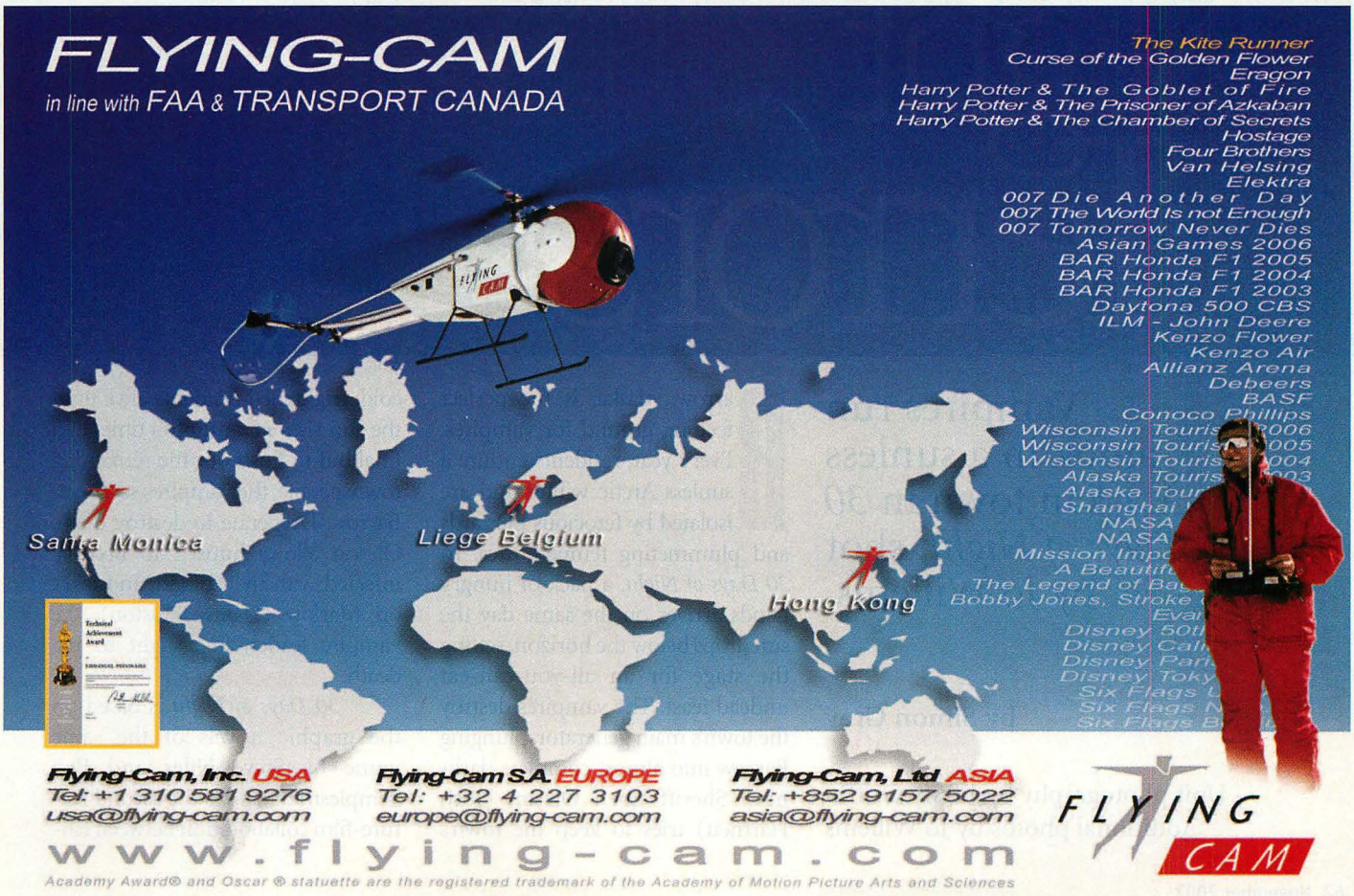
2.40:1
Super 35mm
(3-perf)

Arricam Studio, Lite; Arri 235
Arri and Angenieux lenses

Kodak Vision2
100T 5212, 200T 5217, 500T 5218

Digital Intermediate

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Night Terrors

Vampires run amok in a sunless Alaskan town in *30 Days of Night,* shot by Jo Willems.

by Simon Gray

Unit photography by Kirsty Griffin
Additional photos by Jo Willems

Barrow, Alaska, is the perfect feeding ground for vampires. Every year, residents endure a sunless Arctic winter and are isolated by ferocious blizzards and plummeting temperatures. In *30 Days of Night,* a pack of hungry fiends arrives on the same day the sun drops below the horizon, setting the stage for an all-you-can-eat undead feast. The vampires destroy the town's main generator, plunging Barrow into almost complete darkness. Sheriff Eben Oleson (Josh Hartnett) tries to keep the town's cold, frightened residents alive until the sun rises in a month's time. In a final bid to flush out the remaining townspeople, the vampires set fire to Barrow. Desperate to destroy them, Oleson allows himself to become infected with their blood, and takes on Marlow (Danny Huston), the vampire leader, in a fight to the death.

30 Days of Night is based on the graphic novels of the same name by Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith, and is the second feature-film collaboration between cin-

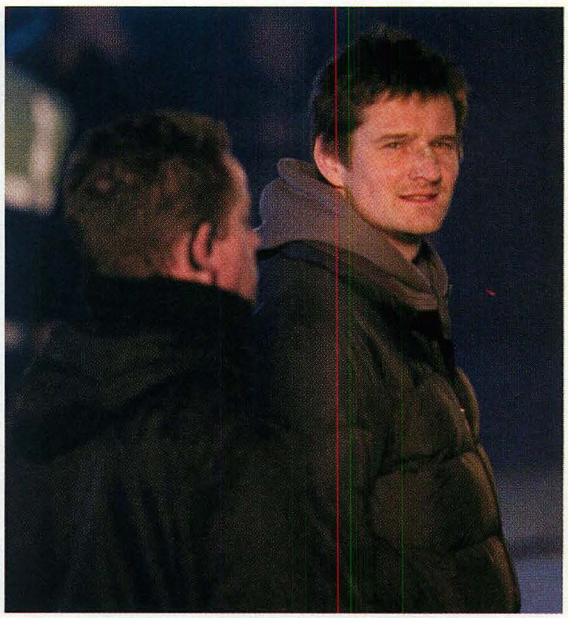


Opposite: When Barrow, Alaska, is plunged into a month-long darkness, Arvin (Andrew Stehlin) and a horde of hungry vampires begin to feed on the townsfolk in *30 Days of Night*. This page,left: Arvin confronts local resident Denise (Amber Sainsbury) and Sheriff Eben Oleson (Josh Hartnett). Below: Cinematographer Jo Willems says he and director David Slade strove to lend a sense of realism to the movie's fantastic events: "David and I agreed that if the audience feels these horrifically scary things are happening to real people in an actual environment, it's a much stronger experience."

ematographer Jo Willems (*Hard Candy; AC* May '05) and director David Slade. Willems notes that some creative license was taken with the big-screen adaptation: "For dramatic purposes, the period of constant darkness was shortened to one month — in reality, it's 68 days, two short of our shooting schedule. Also, the population of Barrow is around 4,000, but in our film it's more like 150." Despite these differences, Slade's chief concern was that the town and people appear completely believable. "David and I agreed that if the audience feels these horrifically scary things are happening to real people in an actual environment, it's a much stronger experience," says Willems. "We did not want the typical smoke and shafts of lights to create theatrical horror; we wanted it much more realistic."

Given that most of the action is set at night, Willems' choice of stock, Kodak's Vision2 200T 5217, raised a few eyebrows. He explains: "I wanted to shoot most of the film on 200 ASA negative because it has much more tonal range and richness than 500 ASA. Also, a lot of the action takes place on snow, at night. Everything needed to look as if lit by moonlight. Because of the light tone of snow, I exposed the snow two stops under and rated the film at 800 ASA, or otherwise everything looked like daylight. 5217 gave a phenomenal richness to the images, with fantastic detail and resolution. Even when conditions were very dark, it never went grainy. It was important to us to capture the fundamental look of the film on the negative, rather than rely on the digital-intermediate [DI] process to create the desired effect." Willems' technique utilized the toe of the negative's curve, creating lower-contrast images. "A denser negative, when printed down, would have resulted in deep blacks, which was too slick a look for this film," he says. "I prefer the blacks to have a sense of softness without being flat. I wanted a certain openness to the film rather than being densely dark."

Another key element of the picture's look was compressing the contrast ratio in production and costume design. "We had a combina-



Photos courtesy of Columbia Pictures; additional photos and frame grabs courtesy of Jo Willems.

Night Terrors



Above: Eben (right) and his estranged wife, Stella (Melissa George), try to protect the town's rapidly dwindling population from the vampires. Below: Stella has her husband's back.

tion of white snow, dark-gray buildings and dark, often black, vampire wardrobe," says the cinematographer. "Knowing that I would be printing down in the DI, I needed to shift the tonal values of the buildings up the gray scale, closer to the value of the snow, so I asked [production designer] Paul Austerberry to keep some of the buildings in the mid-tone range. I also made sure we kept the chroma in the buildings, because the image was going to be desaturated in the DI, and I didn't want it to go black-and-white." While the denser tones of the vampire's costumes provide natural contrast against the snow, highlights were created by ensuring the constant presence of snowflakes on the fabric, and the blood makeup gave parts of the fabric a sheen.

To light the vampires, Willems adopted a less-is-more approach, keeping them down in exposure. Early in the film, when a group of vampires attacks the communications station outside of Barrow, the creatures are visible only as dark silhouettes against moonlit snow, with the beam of a victim's torch providing an occasional horrifying glimpse of them. "I didn't give the vampires much detail, especially in action sequences," says Willems. "When Marlow first appears, his skin tone is 4 stops under key. Danny Huston was then able to play the backlight on his skin to reveal or hide detail. Every once in awhile I gave the vampires a bit more detail, just to remind the audience how scary they are!

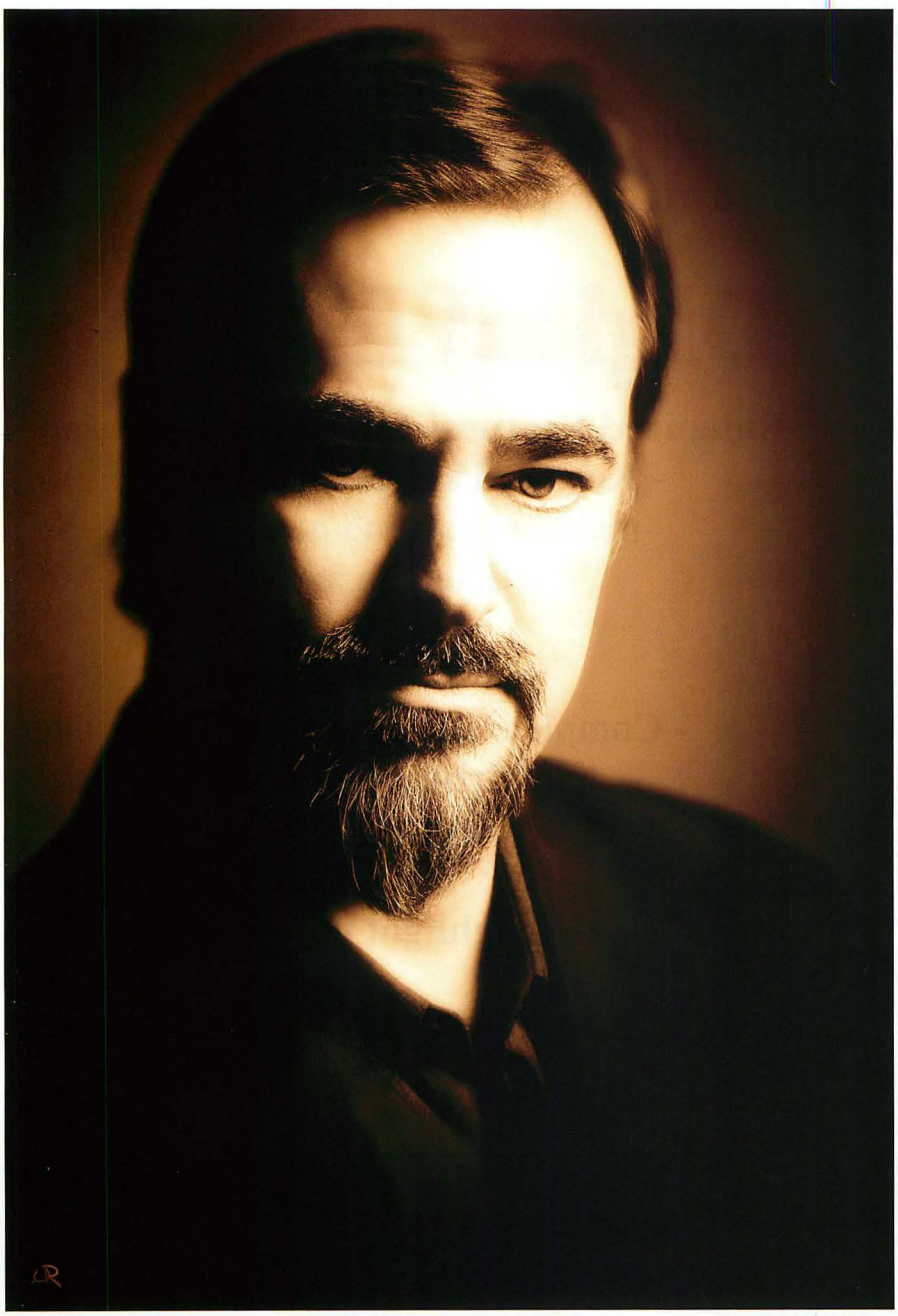
"When shooting actors this dark, eyelights assume increased importance," he continues. "As long as there's a 'ping' in the eyes, the character is alive. Eyelights were my saving grace on this film — for both human and vampire characters." The actors playing the vampires wore black contact lenses, giving Willems the opportunity to use a specific style of eyelight. "I put Dinos through 8-by-12-foot frames to light the vampires very softly and provide a large, soft eyelight rather than a pinpoint of light. With the contact lenses they're wearing, it gives them an unnatural, off-kilter look."

Principal photography for *30 Days of Night* took place on New Zealand's North and South islands. Interior and exterior sets were shot at the Henderson Valley Studios and Hobsonville Aerodrome. The Waitakere Ranges Regional Park and the Waiorau Snow Farm were used for Barrow exteriors. "There were 220 scenes to shoot in 70 days, so the schedule was pretty quick," says Willems. "Locations were used sparingly for wide shots at the beginning of the film, while the majority of our time was spent on set."

Base lighting for exteriors was provided by "Moon Pods," upside-down half-spheres containing 200 1,000-watt Par cans that were purpose-built by gaffer Sean O'Neill. All exterior lighting was tungsten, Willems' preferred source. "HMI lights can give skin tones a certain



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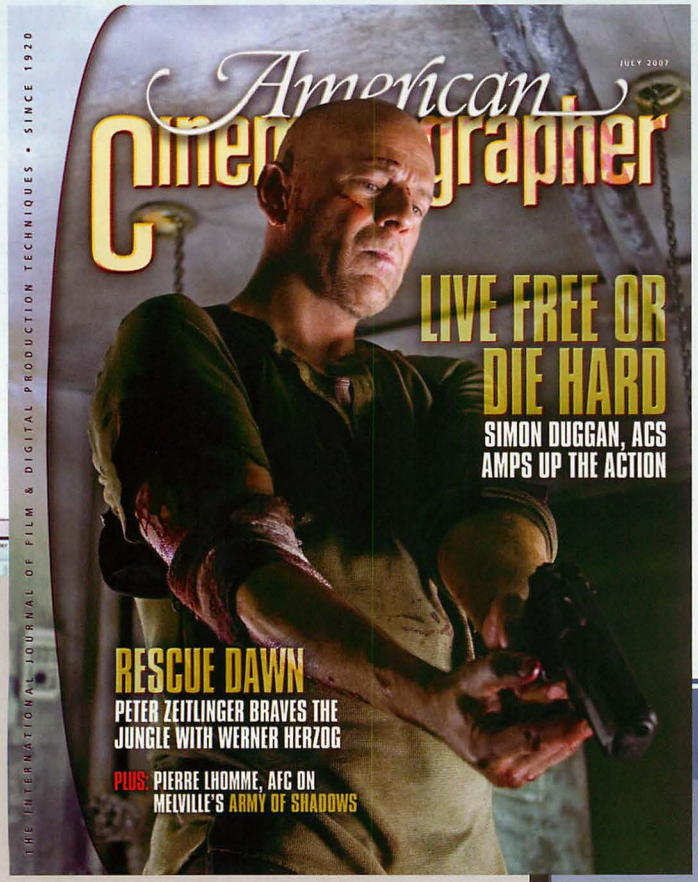
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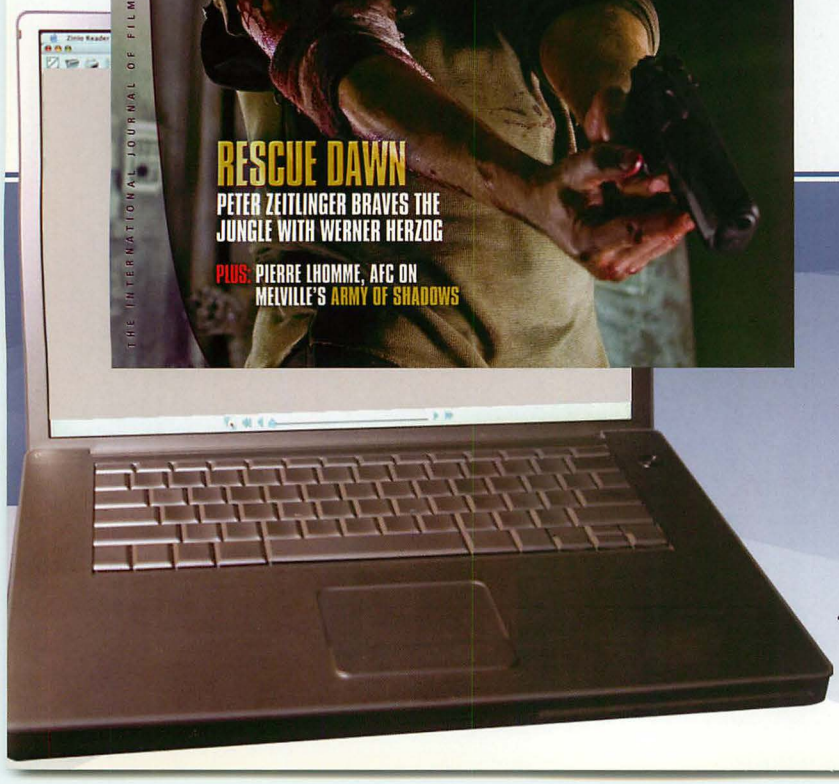
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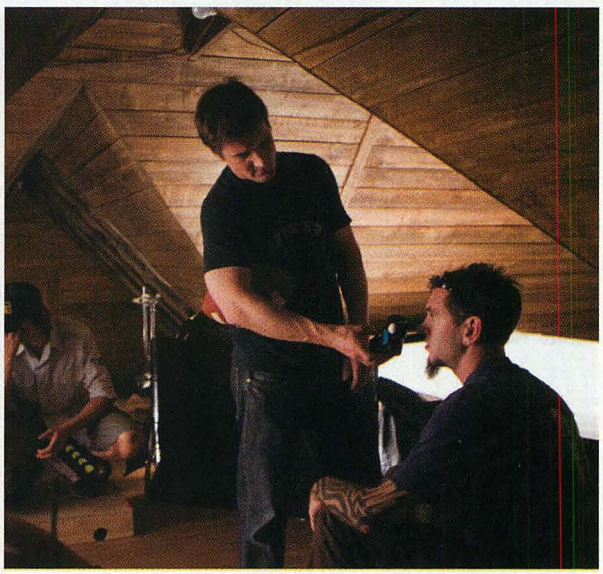




crispness I don't like, unless they're put through a large amount of diffusion, and even then it can be hard to get rid of that slightly unnatural quality," he says. "Tungsten light has an inherent soft, gentle, glowing quality that reflects from the skin in a different way." He also employed Dinos and Dinettes for exteriors. "They're quick, easy to use and very versatile. I always try to use simplicity when lighting, no matter what the size of the setups." Interior setups made use of space lights for soft, overhead moonlight, while a range of lamps — including Dinos, Kino Flos, 2Ks and 650s — lit the sets.

Willems found that lighting exteriors posed fewer problems than the often-cramped interior sets. "Overall, I was after a soft look, and by using the Moon Pods on exteriors it was fairly easy to achieve a soft moonlight effect. However, once the film gets going, a lot of the action takes place indoors. The townspeople hide from the marauding vampires in small spaces, anywhere they can find. Also, the power is out, so the only source of light is the moonlight. The lighting needed to look realistic, but in reality you wouldn't see your hand in front of your face!" An example is the attic set in which the film's main protagonists hide from the vampires for an extended period of time. A-shaped with steep pitched roofs on either side, the set was 8' wide and 25' long, and all the windows were boarded up. "You could just about stand up in there without hitting your head," recalls Willems. "Given the limited space and the absence of windows, it was quite a challenge to get any light in there at all. There were times when the characters had a small gas lantern, but most of the time there was nowhere for the light to come from." He decided to use a non-directional source from the top of the set. The peak of the ceiling was left off, with the hole hidden by support beams. Through this gap,





Above: Marlow (Danny Huston), the leader of the vampire horde, orchestrates the attack on the Barrow population. The show's makeup artists created a pearlescent base for the vampires' skin. Bottom left: The vampire characters wore black contact lenses, which allowed Willems to provide them with a soft eyelight generated by Dinos aimed through 8'x12' diffusion frames. Bottom right: Willems takes a light reading in the attic set, where the film's protagonists hide. The set was lit with a non-directional source from above.

Night Terrors



Above, a citizen tries to use a trench digger against the vampires, with unfortunate consequences. Because of the inherent danger in using the actual trench-digging tractor throughout the entire sequence, the art department constructed a replica of wood and rubber that could be towed on a large boat trailer (right). A 4'-wide platform built around the tractor provided space to mount generators, lights and cameras.

Willems created a directionless soft light with Kino Flos and Redheads, which he kept 3 stops under.

Much of the action in *30 Days of Night* involves tractors, cars and other industrial equipment typical of an oil town. In a particularly violent night sequence, one of the townsmen takes on the vampires with a trench-digger, a vehicle with a huge chainsaw mounted at the front. Much carnage ensues before the digger is driven into the local hotel, which is blown up with dynamite. "The actual trench-digging tool is extremely dangerous, so the art department built an exact replica made of wood and rubber that could be safely run throughout the sequence." The vehicle was placed on a large trailer normally used for transporting boats, and towed by a truck. "A 4-foot-wide platform was built around the digger, which provided space to mount a couple of generators, lights and cameras," recalls Willems. "Stunt performers were able to jump on and off of the digger as it was towed." To give the machine a menacing, beastly quality, he mounted extra lights on the front and top of the digger, pointing straight into the lens. "It gave the scene more aggression and also lit the vampires on top of the digger. I had a Kino Flo built inside the canopy to provide some fill."

A variety of simulated travel sequences in a car, set mostly at night, were also filmed. "We couldn't pull the car on an A-frame because there wasn't enough space to turn around in the set, so a small rig was built on the back of the car that could hold a 3K generator," says Willems. "This meant actors were able to drive the vehicle themselves. The lighting is compromised a little, but the driving looks much more real. A second platform was built onto the side of the vehicle for an operator, and with a Kino Flo coming in from the windscreen, off we went! This was my approach for

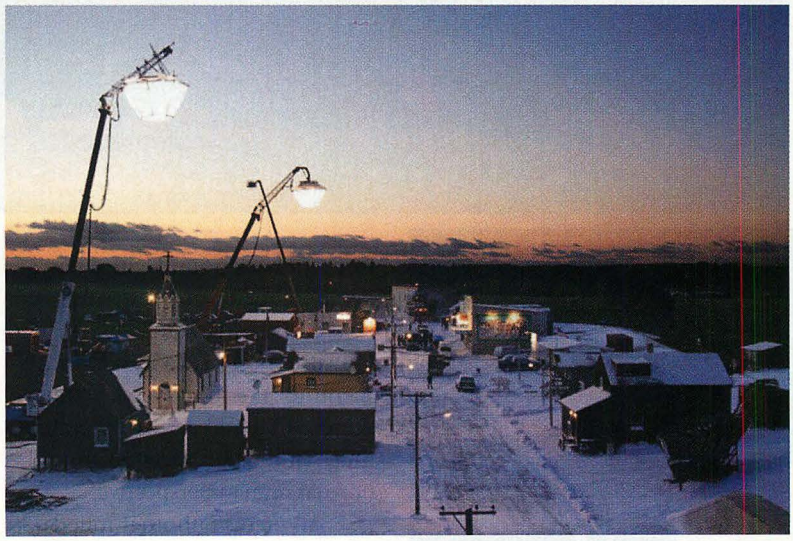






most of the simulated travel sequences. Before the generators in the town get cut, I replicated some streetlights hitting the actors while doing driving shots. Rather than place lights along the driving path, a couple of small units were mounted on Eben's police car and controlled from a dimmer, so I could bring them in and out at any time for interactive lighting."

30 Days of Night was shot with two cameras (operated by Rob Marsh and Cameron McLean) running simultaneously, an approach Willems finds beneficial. "My approach to lighting has always been quite instinctual, and although using more than one camera can at times compromise the lighting, I think it has clear advantages. I'd rather keep the momentum of the shoot going rather than over-finesse the image and make everybody wait. Two-camera coverage also helps when two actors are improvising, because you will always have both performances covered. David likes to set the shot and choose the lens; he prefers longer focal lengths, so we used the 75mm for mid-shots and the 100mm and 150mm for close-ups. A lot of this film takes place in close-up, because the human characters are fearful that if they make a sound, the vampires will find them. Isolating people





Top left: Newly arrived vampires scout the town. Top right: As this frame from the film illustrates, Willems had the silvery feel of night exteriors enhanced in the DI grade. Middle and bottom: Purpose-built by gaffer Sean O'Neill, Moon Pods provided exterior moonlight illumination. The Moon Pods are upside-down, diffused half-spheres that contain 200 1,000-watt Par cans. "I was after a soft look," notes Willems, who prefers tungsten light, "and by using the Moon Pods on exteriors, it was fairly easy to achieve a soft moonlight effect."

Night Terrors



Right: To maintain better control of the environment, the production constructed the town of Barrow in New Zealand's Hobsonville Aerodrome. Illumination was provided by tungsten fixtures and overhead space lights. Below: Willems (crouching) watches as director David Slade uses a viewfinder to check his framing on Eben's upended truck.



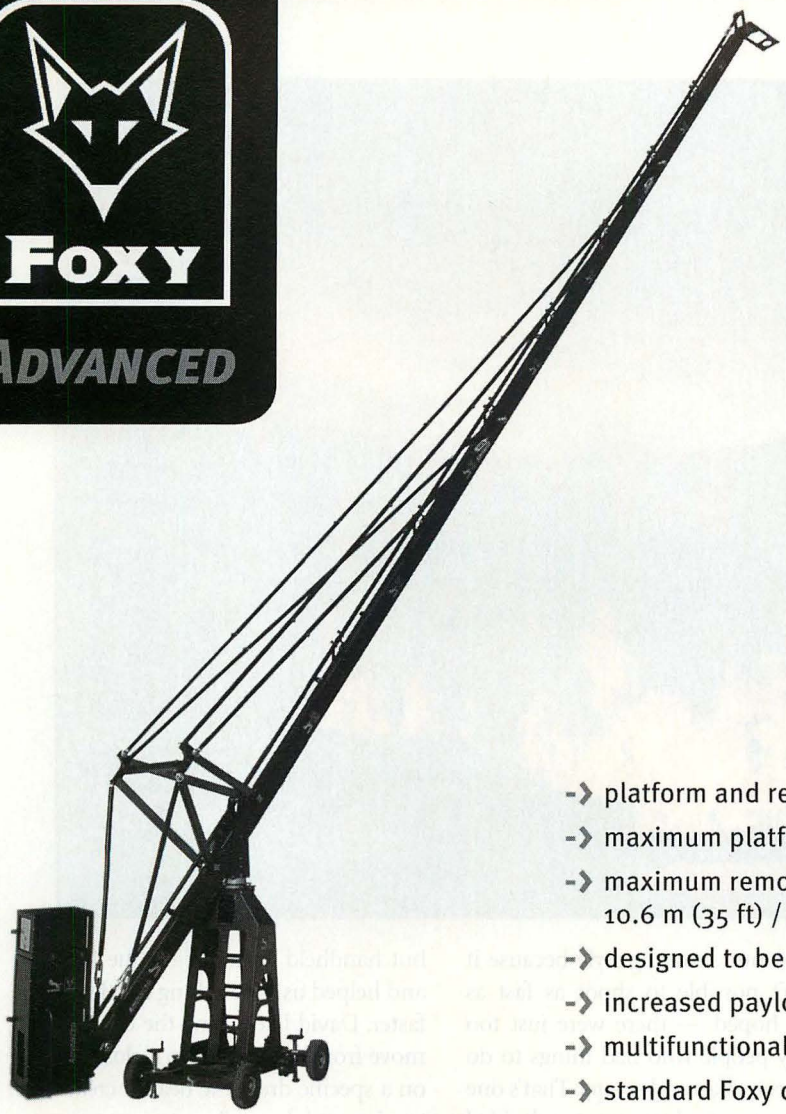
from the background with a narrow depth of field and restricting the field of view maintains the tension. Claustrophobia is an important element to the film's style, and to achieve that and a sense of realism, much of the film was shot from the normal human perspective."

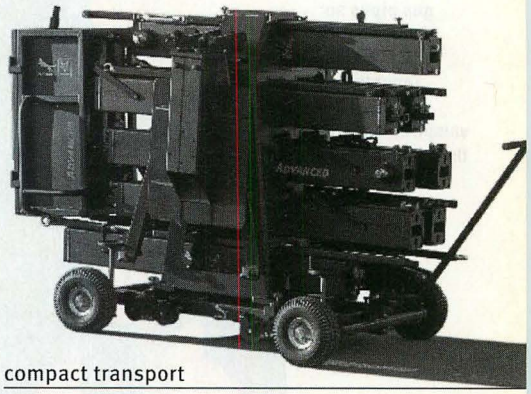
Willems photographed *30 Days of Night* in Super 35mm using Panaflex Millennium XL cameras and Primo lenses. Apart from the occasional ND filter, he kept the lens clean. He notes that the combination of his classic approach to lighting and Slade's contemporary aesthetics, such as fast cutting, jump cutting, narrow shutter angles and raw handheld camera movement, "builds a world that tries to stay away from popcorn movies and creates a more lasting experience with a little more value and depth."

Given the Arctic climate of Barrow, snow was a constant presence in the film. "The best snow was made from paper — it's mixed with water and sprayed," says Willems. "We also used Epsom salt for some scenes, and it reacted completely differently to light than the paper did. The particles are so small and crystal-like that they soaked the light up a lot more; it didn't bounce back so well."

As befits a horror movie, *30 Days of Night* is not without its fair share of blood effects. "Of course, the density and color of blood is important in a vampire film," says the cinematographer. "I did tests to establish how the blood would react with the way I was rating the stock. The special-effects department had four different types of blood: human blood, vampire blood that was almost black, blood on snow, and blood that would be backlit on windows, which had to be a little denser to keep it from going orange and yellow. We also did a lot of makeup tests for the vampires, looking at a bronze tone that was deemed too warm and then a quite reflective base we also rejected. The final result [makeup artists] Jane O'Kane and Gino Acevedo came up with is fantastic, even and pearles-

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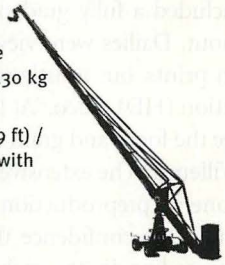




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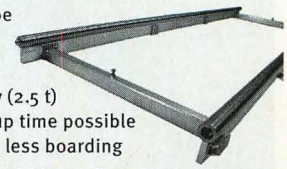
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Night Terrors

Right: To force the townspeople out of hiding, the vampires set Barrow's buildings on fire. All structures in close proximity were rigged with propane gas pipes so they could be burned repeatedly. Below: The vampires admire their handiwork.



cent, with a slight sheen. I used what could almost be called beauty lighting on the vampires; there's a great contrast between their beauty and the horrific creatures they are.

"All the snow and blood effects led to a lot of reset times," he continues. "David and I needed to adjust our shooting style because it wasn't possible to shoot as fast as we'd hoped — there were just too many people who had things to do between takes and setups. That's one of the practical reasons we decided on a handheld approach. We initially wanted to use a lot of Steadicam, but handheld felt right for the film and helped us move along a little bit faster. David likes using the dolly to move from a mid-shot to a close-up on a specific dramatic beat to create tension and drama."



Willems' preproduction tests included a fully graded DI and filmout. Dailies were viewed at times on prints, but mostly on high-definition (HD) video. "At least you can see the focus and grain on HD," says Willems. "The extensive testing we'd done in preproduction gave David and I the confidence that we were proceeding in the right direction." At press time, the DI was being completed at Park Road Post in New Zealand by colorist Clare Burlinson. The negative was scanned at 2K resolution using 10-bit log files, and the grading and conforming were done on Quantel's Pablo. "The scans Park Road did on Weta Digital's Arriscanner were the best I have seen," notes Willems. "In the grade, we focused on enhancing the silver

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Night Terrors



After 30 days of night, the sun finally rises, giving the remaining townspeople hope for survival. Due to New Zealand's variable weather conditions, the sunrise sequence was shot on stage against bluescreen.

quality of the vampire's skin tones and the silvery feel of night exteriors. We didn't want an overtly stylized look, but something more mature, subtle and lasting."

The climax of the film occurs when the vampires set Barrow ablaze. Oleson, having injected himself with vampire blood, takes on Marlow as the town burns around them. "The most important parameter for this scene was to see the detail and rich color of the flames surrounding the fight," recalls Willems. "In testing, we determined that a stop of at least T11 was required. Propane burns a lot hotter then liquid fuel, but it is much safer and user friendly. It also has less smoke. All of the houses in close proximity were rigged with gas pipes so they could be repeatedly set on fire. Of course, the takes could only be around one minute each before the wood would start to burn!

"The fire itself provided quite a lot of illumination for the buildings, so I could focus on lighting the actors. Undiffused Dinos put through a flicker box with Full CTO gels created the warmth of the fire, and cooler fill from 'moonlight' was provided by overhead softboxes gelled with ½ CTB. Flame bars were also used close to the actors in order to make the effect of the firelight more visible. It was a combination that worked very well.

"A lot of the fight was shot handheld to give it a down-and-

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dirty feel," he adds. "Long lenses helped create the impression of a living hell without us having to set the whole town on fire. We had a couple of background flame bars on the ground that provided depth, and some of the deep-background flames are CGI."

After shooting so many sequences at night, Willems and the crew were relieved to shoot the final sequence of the film, in which the sun finally rises again on Barrow. "It was one of the most exciting sequences to light and shoot," affirms Willems. "The nightmare the survivors have endured is finally over. Oleson and his wife, Stella [Melissa George], sit on a little hill and watch the sun rise over the Arctic Ocean. The sequence was shot fairly late in our schedule, so it felt like we were all emerging into the daylight. We'd shot seven consecutive weeks of night sequences, and we were all getting a little tired of it!"

To avoid being at the mercy of New Zealand's changeable weather, however, the sunrise was shot on a bluescreen stage. "The tricky thing about making a soundstage sunrise look real is having the quality and amount of fill look natural and the intensity of the sun just right," says the cinematographer. "Before the sun is fully over the horizon, the color of the fill light, which comes from the sky, is very blue. The fill at the start of the scene is about 2½ stops under, and when the sun is fully out and the camera is behind the characters, the sun is about 2 stops over key. I had the set surrounded with Ultra Bounces to create an incredibly soft ambient light with no shadow. Overhead we had very soft spacelights gelled with ½ CTB providing fill. Our sun was two Dinos going through Full CTS and ½ Magenta. We first thought of going through dimmers and bringing the light up slowly, but it just didn't look right, so we put a black drape in front of the lights and lowered it during the scene. We had about 20 sunrises that day!" ■

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Losing Control

Martin Ruhe creates a black-and-white palette from color stock for a striking biopic about the late rock star Ian Curtis.

by Bob Davis

Unit photography by Dean Rogers.
Additional photography by Anton Corbijn and Tim Battersby.

It seems only natural that Dutch photographer and music-video director Anton Corbijn (Nirvana's "Heart-Shaped Box," Mercury Rev's "Opus 40") would make his first feature about the short life of Ian Curtis, front man for the influential post-punk Brit band Joy Division. In 1979, Corbijn, then 24 years old, had immigrated to England in response to Joy Division's first album, "Unknown Pleasures." Two weeks later, he took a now-iconic, fluorescent-lit, black-and-white photograph of Curtis and fellow band members Peter Hook, Bernard Sumner and Stephen Morris with their backs to the camera, about to be swallowed into the depths of a London tube escalator.

Two decades later, however, Corbijn (who has since served as artistic advisor to both U2 and Depeche Mode), initially resisted producer Orian Williams' efforts to get him to tackle a rock biopic based on the memoirs of Curtis' wife, Debbie. Corbijn feared that the singer's tragic story — Curtis committed suicide by hanging on May 18, 1980, at the age of 23 — might seem too predictable.

In late 2002, when Corbijn met Berlin-based cinematographer Martin Ruhe (who, at 36, was already a veteran of more than 200 music videos and nearly as many commercials), both had worked independently on videos for German actor-turned-pop-star Herbert Grönemeyer. "Herbert introduced us at a party for his platinum record," Ruhe recalls. "Soon after, Anton and I shot our first music video together, for Grönemeyer."

Other collaborations followed, notably music videos for Depeche Mode ("Suffer Well") and Coldplay (the black-and-white, sci-fi-influenced "Talk"). *Control*, winner of a special Camera d'Or at Cannes (as well as Best New British Feature and Best British Performance prizes at the Edinburgh International Film Festival), was only Ruhe's second feature. "When we first started talking about *Control*," the cinematographer recalls, "it was clear that we



Opposite: In *Control,* English rock singer Ian Curtis (Sam Riley) finds his rising stardom stunted by personal conflicts and the onset of epileptic seizures. This page, top: Curtis performs the song "Warsaw" during an early gig with his band, Joy Division. Below: Contrasty lighting helps convey the singer's angst during a performance scene in which he suffers an epileptic fit. "We used only harsh 1K and 500-watt Par cans, nothing modern," says cinematographer Martin Ruhe, who studied period concert photos for lighting design. "We put them wherever there was room and pointed them directly at our actors."

wanted to make it black-and-white." In preparation for the shoot, Ruhe screened some recent black-and-white pictures: *The Man Who Wasn't There; Good Night, and Good Luck;* and *Angel-A*. "Great as they were," he offers, "we were after something else, something more grounded in the feel of England in the Seventies."

In particular, the filmmakers didn't want to let Corbijn's idiosyncratic, anti-glamorous approach to portraiture (black-and-white, high-contrast, "overcooked" imagery) overwhelm the emotional content of the film. "With black-and-white it's tempting to stylize things, to create an artificial world, but we didn't want the film stock to become a character on its own," Ruhe points out. "One problem is that black-and-white stocks are very grainy. The tests we shot already looked dated."

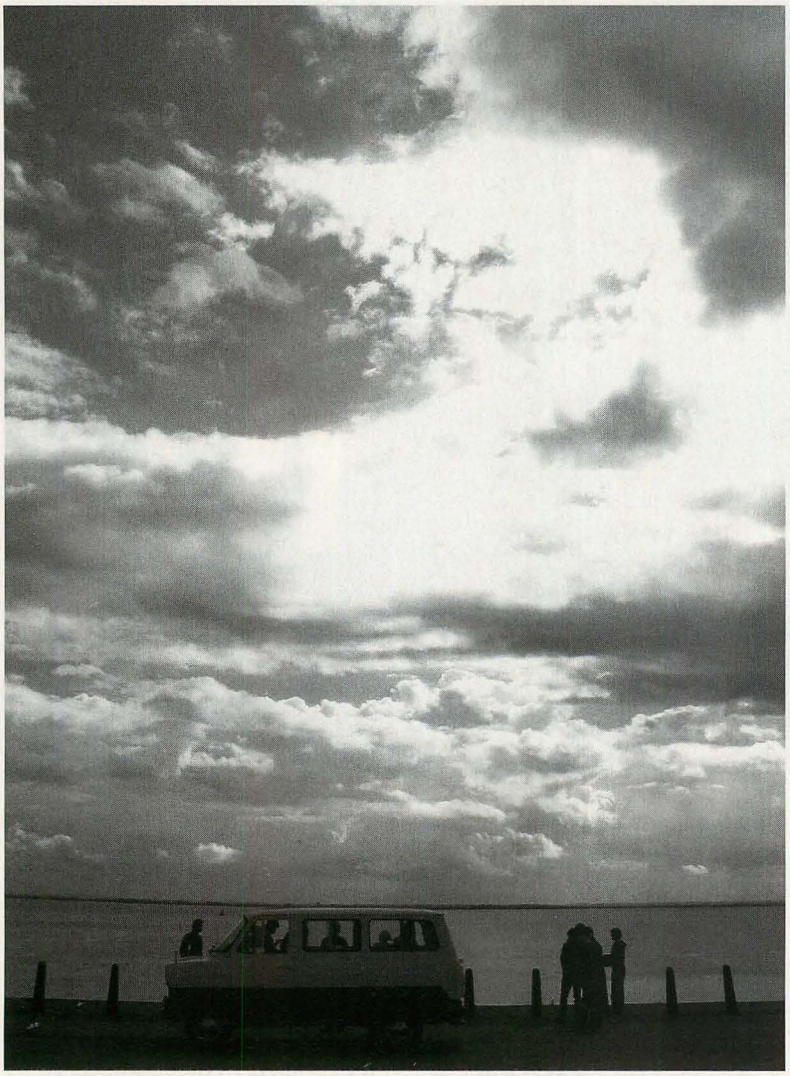
So for *Control*, Ruhe ran two Kodak Vision2 color stocks through his Panaflex Millennium XL camera — 500T 5218 for the concert sequences and 200T 5217 for everything else — with an eye toward digital intermediate (DI) post-processing. "The tricky thing about the DI pathway is getting real black-and-white onto the screen," he says. "Most distributors aren't able to show expensive black-and-white prints, but when you write your DI back out to film, a shift of half a step in the print lights may result in a tinted image." Indeed, though the print that screened at Cannes convinced nearly everyone that the film had been shot on black-and-white stock, a couple of the reels projected at a press screening in Los Angeles had a slightly red or green cast.

"Two more reasons we decided to do the DI were budget and logistics," Ruhe concedes. "We had



Photos courtesy of The Weinstein Co., Martin Ruhe and Anton Corbijn.

Losing *Control*



Scenes of the bandmembers touring in less-than-luxurious style offer a striking degree of realism — and a notable lack of glamour. "When the band goes on tour in Europe, they stop to pick up Ian's secret girlfriend, Annik," Ruhe details. "This is one of the very few moments when we go broader and show some landscape. We shot this scene only with natural light, and we chose to do it in the afternoon so the sun would be behind us, making the background more whitish."

only £3 million for a 42-day, six-day-a-week shoot. There were 60 locations and we didn't have a lot of time for lighting. So we wanted to have the option to tweak a few things we might not have time to deal with on set."

Ken Loach's 1969 picture *Kes* became a key reference for the filmmakers. Set, cast and shot in working-class Yorkshire, the gritty, realistic film concerns a boy whose chance encounter with falconry provides a sliver of hope in his otherwise bleak existence. "It's a color film, but we both liked its simplicity and beauty," Ruhe says. "Everything feels real."

That realism was crucial for the filmmakers, especially because they were making a film about the recent past, concerning a group of people who were mostly still living. "Anton is Dutch and I'm German, so we were two 'foreigners' making this English working-class story," Ruhe observes. "We were struggling for both documentary realism and drama. We wanted to let the actors tell the story, rather than disrupting the narrative with overtly aesthetic choices."

As part of their preparation, Ruhe and Corbijn studied social documentarian Martin Parr's portraits of Brits in their living rooms. "We liked how the light fell," the cinematographer says. "It wasn't always beautiful, but it was real." *Control*'s production designer, Chris Roope, worked from Debbie Curtis' photos. Ruhe notes, "Some locations were quite bland, like the flat where Ian and Debbie live. There's no detail. Apparently, Ian hated seeing anything on the walls." The scantly decorated sets gave Ruhe little to work with, but he feels they gave *Control* the right tone.

As the movie's story begins, Ian (played by Sam Riley) and Debbie (Samantha Morton) are about 15 years old. At an early stage in prep, Ruhe entertained the idea of using filters to support the actors' transition from teenagers to adults. "Sam and Samantha were already in their mid-to-late twenties," Ruhe notes. "We did some tests, but what ultimately made the progression seem believable was simply the actors' performances." Instead of placing diffusion filters in front of the lens, the cinematographer decided to parallel the characters' physical and emotional development more subtly through lighting.

Over the course of the film, Ruhe's images increase in contrast. Early scenes — in Ian's parents' flat, at the employment office where he works, in Debbie's bedroom — are relatively low-contrast and high-tone. "At first, the lighting is flatter, with more fill," he details. "When the young Ian recites Wordsworth and takes Debbie's hand for the first time, there are no strong contrasts, no blacks." Even for a scene depicting the young couple's first date, a David Bowie concert, Ruhe lit the pair with Kino Flos shined through some cheap linen gaffer Julian White had included in his arsenal. "Instead of letting the smoke-filled background go dark, we bleached it out with 650-watt Fresnels," Ruhe notes.

Black makes a dramatic appearance during the band's drive back from its first London gig. The heater in Bernard's car is on the fritz, and Ian, for the first time in his bandmates' presence, has an

epileptic seizure. Greenscreen and rear projection were beyond *Control*'s budget for the driving shots, and staging the scene on a trailer would have cost Ruhe one of his rare scheduled night shoots. "We decided to do it the poor man's way: with a stationary car in the studio," he says with a laugh. "We hung 12 5K softlights on each side of the car and ran them through a dimmer board. We added some fill in the foreground, but that went randomly into complete darkness. To simulate traffic we put two 1K Par cans on a floating rig way back behind our car. And somebody rocked the car a bit!"

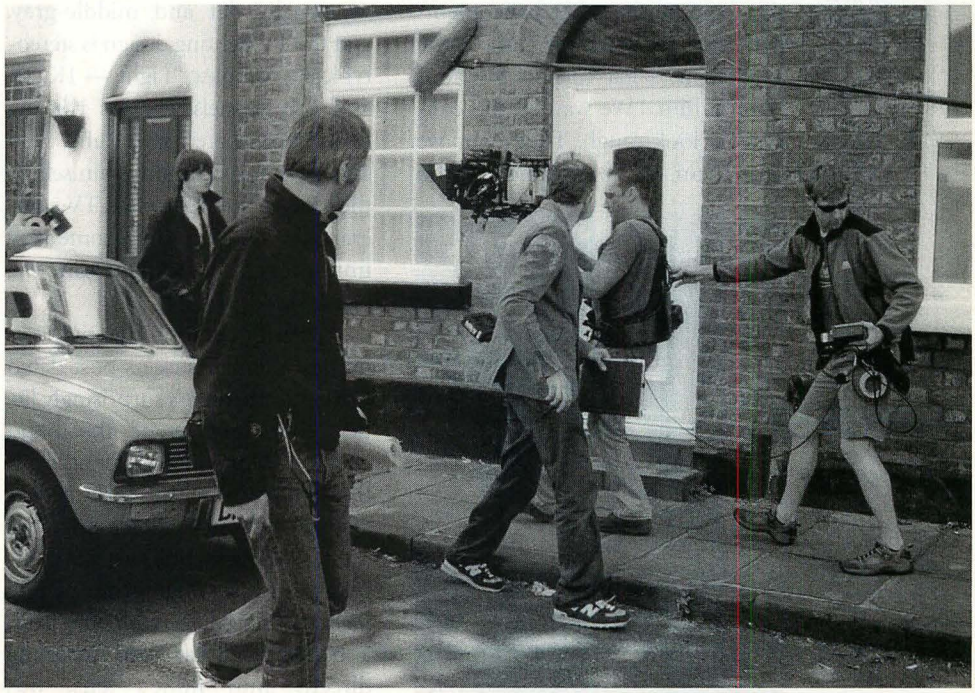
Because of all that, Ruhe "got away with" a pitch-black background. For the next scene, when the panicked boys drag Ian's quaking body onto the shoulder of the road, Ruhe chose to keep that background pitch black as well. "We just set up a single Maxi-Brute and filled in a bit with a Kino Flo and a 2K bounce. I wasn't sure if it was too abstract, but I think it works."

To show Curtis' increasing isolation and despair as the film progresses, Ruhe introduces more contrast and the occasional striking composition. One example is a frontal wide shot of the singer sitting on a couch positioned low in the largely empty frame as he writes the lyrics for "She's Lost Control"; another is a centered wide shot of Ian standing outside a hospital, lost in thought after Debbie has given birth. "You can see that contrast clearly in his fight with Debbie the night before he dies," Ruhe points out. "She comes home into a well-lit living room, and he's waiting in the dark kitchen. They talk at the door between the two rooms, but neither makes it into the other's world."

For *Control*'s re-creations of Joy Division's public appearances, the filmmakers took their cues from historical materials. Corbijn found small clubs in Nottingham that conformed to his memories of late

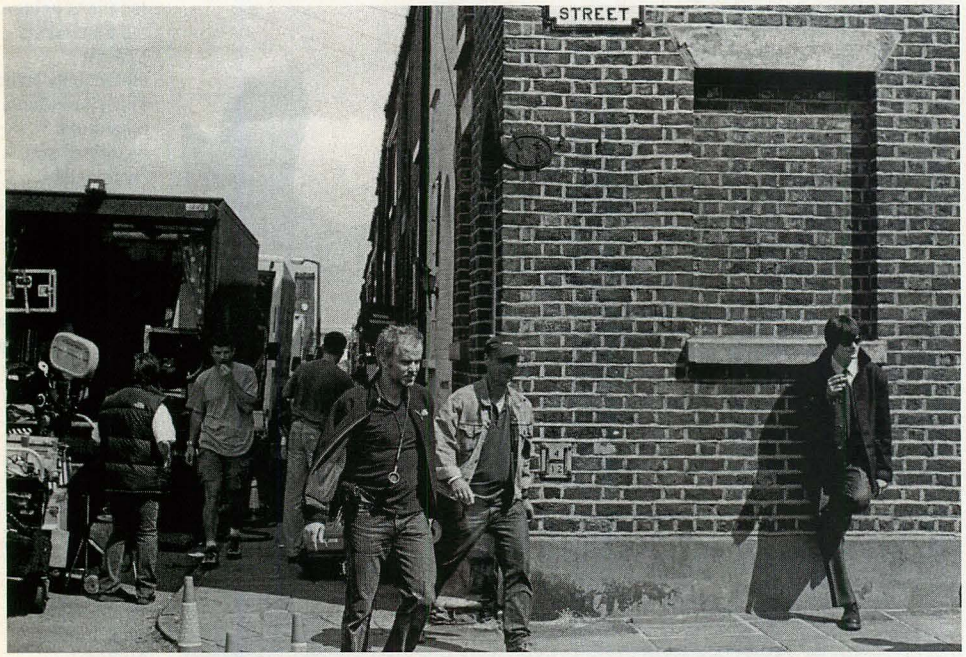






Top: Authentic locations helped the filmmakers effect a melancholy mood. This view shows what Ruhe describes as "typical mid-England housing." Middle: The unremarkable exterior of the late singer's actual working-class flat, at 77 Barton St. in Macclesfield, underscores the realities of his day-to-day struggle. Bottom: Ruhe (in foreground) and director Anton Corbijn (walking in gutter) supervise the blocking of a dynamic Steadicam sequence, operated by Paul Alexander, that tracks the rebellious Curtis through the streets of his neighborhood. The route shown in the film is the actual path that Curtis once took from his home to his job.

Losing *Control*



Above: Ruhe (center, in foreground) strides past a brick-hewn block on Barton Street, while Riley (far right) practices his rock-star posture. Below: Crewmembers set up a ladderpod on location near Manchester.

1970s venues in Manchester and Macclesfield, while Ruhe studied period concert photos for lighting design. "The stages were often quite small with low ceilings," Ruhe observes. "We used only harsh 1K and 500-watt Par cans, nothing modern. We put them wherever there was room and pointed them directly at our actors." When it was impossible to get light on the drummer because the other band members cast shadows on him, Ruhe simply put a Par can on the floor next to him. "We wanted the concerts to look rough. That's why we shot them on 5218, handheld, no zooms, just primes. Back then, the music was the show, and the bands had to deliver to an audience that wanted honest stuff."



Control conflates two historical television broadcasts — one from the BBC, the other from Granada TV — when Joy Division performs on Manchester impresario Tony Wilson's *Granada Reports*. The art direction of the studio set is conventionally flat and middle-gray, and the TV lighting design is stereotypically complex. "Light — 1K, 2K and 5K Fresnels — was coming from everywhere," says Ruhe, who says he enjoyed limiting himself to the tools of the 1970s state-TV cameraman. "We even threw some very unfashionable backlight on the band."

Partly because Joy Division's greatest popular success post-dated Curtis' death, there's surprisingly little other footage of the band onstage. "Most video materials from those days were so dark it was almost impossible to see anything on it," Ruhe says. Still, a striking silhouette of Riley singing the opening lines of "Candidate," with light from a background Par can streaming directly into Ruhe's lens, was inspired by some rare documentary footage. "In that footage it looked like the light was changing randomly, often even hitting spots *between* the musicians," the cinematographer reports. "It was crude." Ruhe's variation on this historical theme consists of three or four Par cans on each side of the stage. One set fades out while the other comes up, so that half of each band member's face is overexposed and the other half remains black. Behind all this, two Kino Flos were positioned below a projection of the cover art for Joy Division's 1979 album *Unknown Pleasures*. Ruhe's chief indulgence was to coordinate the cross-fading Par cans with the music. "It was often very simple how we achieved these things," Ruhe admits. "But the motivations are obvious. One, Joy Division played small venues. How much light can you get in there? And two, we were usually shooting two concerts a day without any pre-rigging or a second lighting crew!" In fact, Ruhe shot all of his night exteriors at the short ends of split days. "We would sometimes start at noon and finish at midnight. Because we were working in midsummer without a second unit, we had about two or three hours to set up *and* shoot night scenes."

One of the film's early turning points takes place outside a working-class Nottingham men's club that the *Control* crew exploited as three separate venues. There, after a Sex Pistols gig, Curtis feels out Sumner and Hook about joining their band. "Again, simplicity was the trick," Ruhe explains. "For this scene, we wired up the marquee with 20 fluorescents, put the 35mm Primo on camera at a low angle and shot up toward the marquee. We bounced a 1K off a card near the actors in the foreground." The scene ends tellingly when the reticent Curtis asks, "So you're really looking for a singer?" Ruhe kills the fluores-

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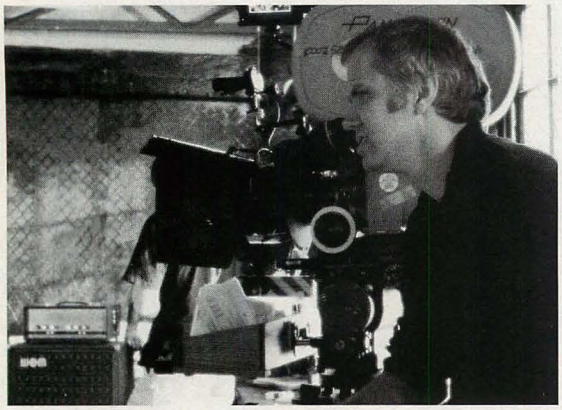
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Losing *Control*



Ruhe lines up a shot.

cents, and the marquee touting the punk rock icons goes dark.

The same club's interior played host to re-creations of the Sex Pistols gig, the previously mentioned Bowie concert, and Joy Division's last performance-cum-riot. Because Ruhe and his crew had only one day to rig, choreograph and shoot Curtis' collapse during the band's final concert — and the ensuing mayhem as the angry crowd trashes the venue — the director of photography sent three camera operators, including himself, into the action. "The approach was basically documentary. We mastered the scene as long as we could and did the closer shots at the same time. The lighting had to work for all three cameras."

To illuminate the audience, Ruhe bounced 5Ks into the ceiling. To pick out Riley he used hard sources — Par cans again — and overexposed him by ¾ of a stop. The intense hard light on Riley's face etched into the relatively grainy 5218 makes it look like the actor is about to disintegrate. "During the course of the film Ian becomes more and more remote," Ruhe says. "He can't reach out to anyone, and the band can't get through to him. We wanted to subtly show that and create a sense of his overwhelming loneliness, even in the midst of all those fans and friends."

Ruhe illustrates Curtis' ever-increasing alienation visually when the singer lays down the vocal track for the aptly named "Isolation." Curtis is secluded, physically and aurally, in the recording booth, while Sumner and Hook ignore him and the sound engineer and Annik, Curtis' Belgian girlfriend, puzzle over his withdrawn behavior, all from the mixing studio. The cinematographer underlines this spatial contrast with light. Ruhe explains: "The outside world is a bit harsh. We fitted a mixing-desk practical with a naked 75-watt bulb and opened the shade so the light hit the recordist's face. We aimed some Dedolights down at the mixing board to create a few hot spots. In the background, Annik, sitting on the sofa, seems to realize how Ian feels. There were three 40-watt practicals on the wall above her, and we

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lit her face with a Kino Flo two-bank wrapped in [gaffer] Julian's linen. We aimed a 5K through a frame to rake the background recording decks."

The lighting and compositions in Curtis' recording booth are more stylized. "His world doesn't have much focus, so the light is diffused. We fixed a four-bank with half-white diffusion above his face and a short four-bank with Julian's linen below the window for fill. To model the wall behind him, we laid another four-bank on the floor." Ruhe shot Riley with a 14mm lens during both frontal close-ups and low-angle off-centered shots. "It has its effect," he admits, "but at that moment, it translates how lost he is.

"Corbijn knew a lot of the people portrayed in our movie," Ruhe notes, "and he had access to a lot of inside material. The letter Ian writes at the beginning of the film, for instance, is a composite of real letters. From these we knew that Curtis had a great affection for Werner Herzog's films." Indeed, when the real Debbie Curtis discovered her husband's body hanging in their kitchen, his turntable was spinning Iggy Pop's "The Idiot," and a videotape of Werner Herzog's *Stroszek*, a strange mix of documentary realism and mythic drama, was lodged in the VCR. An early draft of the screenplay had Curtis run into William Burroughs on the street at night. Corbijn asked Herzog to play Burroughs, and Herzog agreed, but the scene didn't make it into the final version of the script.

Ruhe clearly admires not only Corbijn's work but also his character: "He took a lot of risks, and not only on set. When the financing faltered, he jumped in, became a producer and invested some of his own money. He was under a lot of pressure but never let anybody feel it. He decided to do a black-and-white picture, cast a complete unknown in the lead, and hire a director of photography with little experience in features. Those are risks!" ■

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TV's Top-Rated



Kodak hosts its annual celebration honoring Emmy-nominated cinematographers in Studio City. (Back row, from left): Kodak's Kathy Mazza; Joseph E. Gallagher for *Deadwood*; Thomas Del Ruth, ASC for *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*; Lloyd Ahern II, ASC for *Broken Trail*; Wayne Kennan, ASC for *Rules of Engagement*; Steven V. Silver for *Two and a Half Men*; Phil Abraham for *The Sopranos*; Joel Ransom for *The Path to 9/11*; and Kodak's Bruce Berke. (Front row, from left): George Mooradian for *According to Jim*; Michael Slovis for *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*; Mike Eley for *Jane Eyre*; and Eric Van Haren Noman, ASC for *The Valley of Light*.

This year's Emmy-nominated cinematographers have their moment in the spotlight.

Eastman Kodak fêted this year's Emmy-nominated directors of photography at its annual "Salute to Cinematography" bash, held at Studio City's Bistro Garden Restaurant on Sept. 14. Presented the night before the Creative Arts Primetime Emmys are handed out by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the dinner always draws an appreciative crowd, due in part to its relaxed, non-competitive atmosphere. In recognizing the visual accomplishments of all the nominees, Kodak allows everybody to leave any jitters they might have at home and just enjoy the attention and the camaraderie of their fellow directors of photography. It's also one of the rare occasions when cinematographers get to hang out together.

Kodak has been hosting the event for 26 years. Master of ceremony duties were shared by Kathy Mazza, sales and marketing manager for the U.S. Television and Commercial segment of Kodak's motion-picture business, and Bruce Berke, the company's regional television account manager. Berke joked that it took two people to replace Mike Morelli, who had hosted the event for the past few years.

Mazza read a humorous poem she had written and introduced an all-star cast of ASC officers and board members in attendance. Berke then introduced the nominees and handed each one a Kodak Vision award, which he called "a tangible token of our appreciation for [your] talent."

The following evening at the Shrine Auditorium, Emmy statues were awarded to David Franco for Bury *My Heart at Wounded Knee;* Alik Sakharov, ASC for *Rome;* Steven V. Silver for *Two and a Half Men;* the team of Doug Allan, Martyn Colbeck, Paul Stewart, Simon King, Michael Kelem and Wade Fairley for *Planet Earth;* and the team of Per Larsson (director of photography), John Armstrong, Sylvester Campe, Petr Cikhart, Tom Cunningham, Chip Goebert, Bob Good, Peter Rieveschi, Dave Ross, Uri Sharon and Alan Weeks (camera) for *The Amazing Race.*

— Jean Oppenheimer

Photos by Vicki Mack, courtesy of CCSPR.

Following is a complete list of Emmy nominees and winners
(* denotes winner):

Outstanding Cinematography for a Miniseries or Movie

Lloyd Ahern, ASC
Broken Trail, "Part 1" (AMC)
Mike Eley
Jane Eyre, "Part 1" (PBS)
David Franco*
Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (HBO)
Joel Ransom
The Path to 9/11, "Night 2" (ABC)
Eric Van Haren Noman, ASC
The Valley of Light (CBS)

Outstanding Cinematography for a Single-Camera Series

Phil Abraham
The Sopranos, "Soprano Home Movies" (HBO)
Thomas Del Ruth, ASC
Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip, Pilot (NBC)
Joseph E. Gallagher
Deadwood, "Catbird Seat" (HBO)
Alik Sakharov, ASC*
Rome, "Passover" (HBO)
Michael Slovis
CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, "Built to Kill" (CBS)





Left: Emmy nominees Gallagher, Ahern, Del Ruth and Abraham talk shop. Below: Silver poses with Kennan.

Outstanding Cinematography for a Multi-Camera Series

Wayne Kennan, ASC
Rules of Engagement, "Jeff's Wooby" (CBS)
George Mooradian
According to Jim, "Hoosier Daddy" (ABC)
Steven Silver*
Two and a Half Men, "Release the Dogs" (CBS)

Outstanding Cinematography for Nonfiction Programming

Doug Allan, Martyn Colbeck, Paul Stewart, Simon King, Michael Kelem, Wade Fairley* (cinematographers)
Planet Earth, "Pole to Pole" (Discovery Channel)
Adam Beckman, Cliff Charles (directors of photography)
This American Life, "God's Close-Up" (Showtime)
John Brown (camera), **Robin Smith** (camera)
Meerkat Manor, "Family Affair" (Animal Planet)
Doug Stanley (director of photography), **Zac McFarlane** (director of photography), **Don Bland** (camera), **Cameron Glendenning** (camera), **Todd Stanley** (camera)
Deadliest Catch, "The Unforgiving Sea" (Discovery Channel)

Outstanding Cinematography for Reality Programming

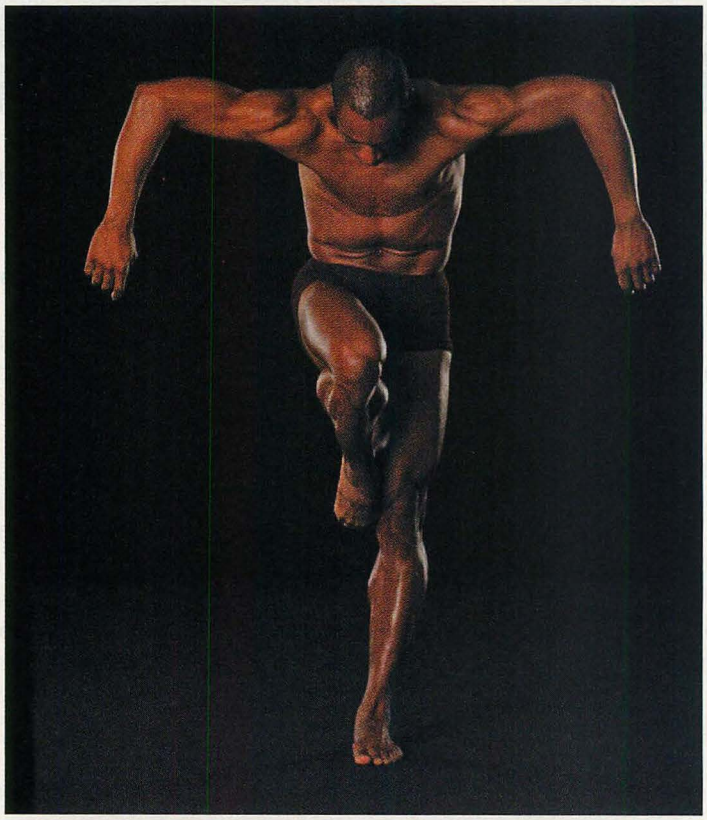
Chris Baron, Meri Pritchett, Jamie Hall (camera)
Intervention, "Sylvia" (A&E)
Douglas Glover (director of photography), **Troy Paff** (camera)
Dirty Jobs, "Mule Logger" (Discovery Channel)
Per Larsson (director of photography), **John Armstrong, Sylvester Campe, Petr Cikhart, Tom Cunningham, Chip Goebert, Bob Good, Peter Rieveschi, Dave Ross, Uri Sharon, Alan Weeks** (camera)*
The Amazing Race, "I Know Phil, Little Ol' Gorgeous Thing" (CBS)
Tony Sacco (director of photography)
Project Runway, "Iconic Statement" (Bravo)
Craig Spirko (director of photography), **Gus Dominguez** (lighting designer)
Top Chef, "Episode 209" (Bravo) ■

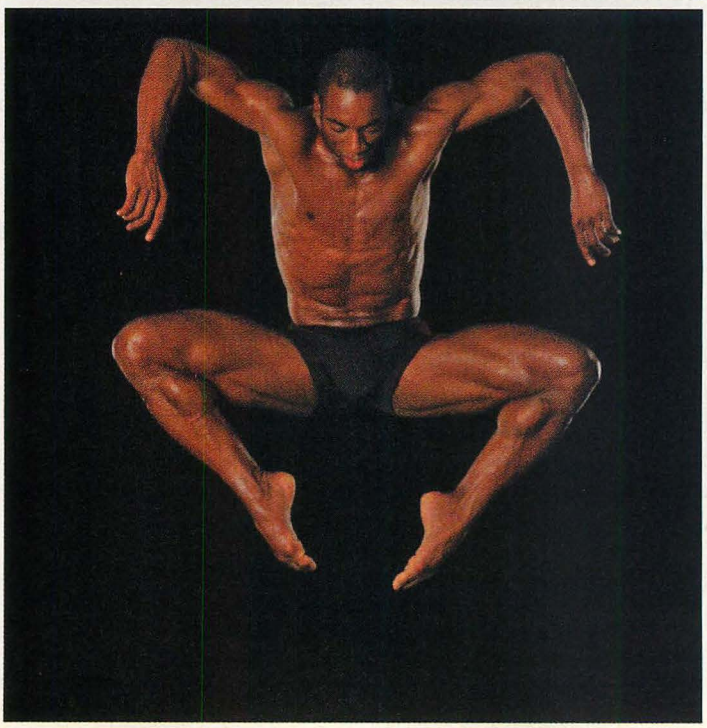


Short Takes

Slow Dancing Shows Ballet's Subtleties at 1,000 fps

by Iain Stasukevich





Photographer David Michalek turned to cinematographer Jim Matlosz to shoot high-speed high-definition footage for the video installation *Slow Dancing*.

When New York photographer David Michalek needed someone to shoot high-definition (HD) high-speed footage for his latest video installation, *Slow Dancing*, he turned to director of photography Jim Matlosz, whose extensive commercial credits include spots for New Balance, Crystal Geyser, Fox Sports and McDonald's, all of which incorporated high-speed film or digital photography. In addition, Matlosz has spent 13 years as a camera technician for Photo-Sonics' high-speed film cameras.

The inspiration for *Slow Dancing* came partly from Michalek's wife, Wendy Whelan, one of the world's top ballerinas. His goal was to convey the full impact of dance, an art form whose lifespan is only as long as the act itself, and create a transient but lingering image.

Matlosz and Michalek met for the first time in July 2006, a year before their collaboration would come to fruition. Michalek came from a still-photo background but had learned a bit about making motion pictures while attending New York University. Matlosz learned his craft by spending years as a camera assistant. They hit it off right away and set about trying to find a suitable camera.

"At the time, David was looking for different high-speed digital cameras, and I was already a fan of Vision Research's cameras," says Matlosz. "I'd worked with them extensively, but none of their cameras were capable of HD yet."

The filmmakers initially turned to NAC, an international imaging manufacturer whose camera systems are typically earmarked for military and scientific use. Its K4 model offered a

Slow Dancing photos courtesy of David Michalek.

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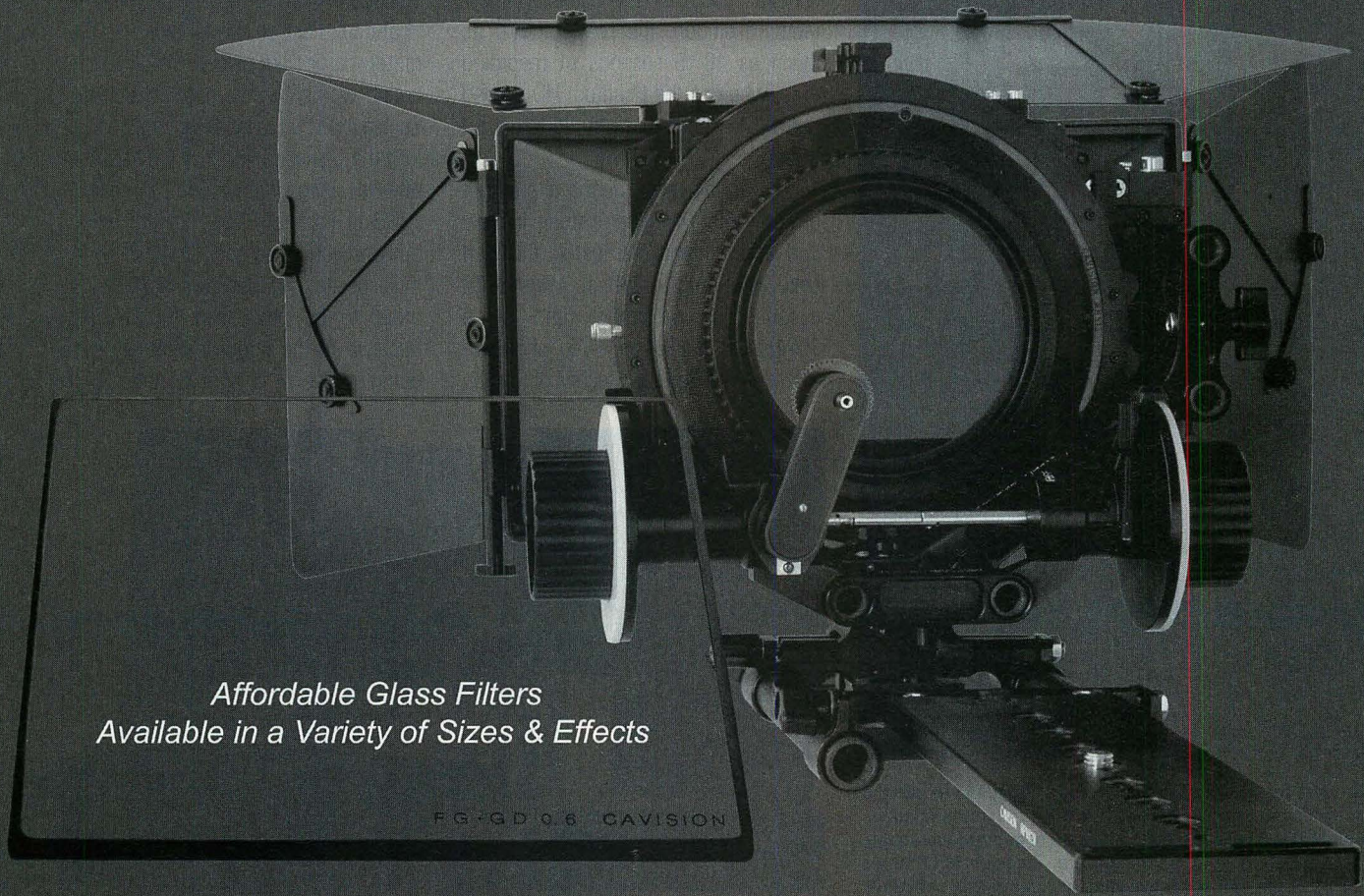
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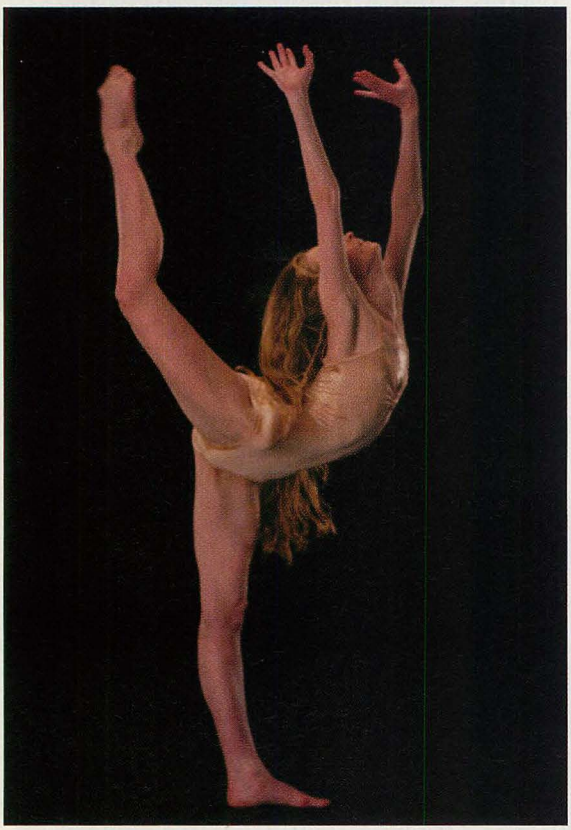
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Above: Each dance action had to be short enough to fit into the Phantom HD camera's 5-second, 1,000-fps recording window. Right: The camera, tilted on its side to capture the action, required a lot of light for exposure. Tungsten 20K fixtures aimed through diffusion gave subjects an intense, soft glow.

1280x1024-pixel image and was available right away.

The filmmakers soon learned that Vision Research was developing the next generation of its high-speed Phantom camera system. With a 2048x2048 CMOS sensor capable of HD or 2K capture, and with more cinema-friendly options available, Matlosz encouraged Michalek to postpone his decision until a side-by-side comparison between the Vision Research camera and the NAC K4 could be made. NAC was unable to provide a camera for evaluation, so Matlosz instead tested a prototype Phantom HD in a parking lot in Los Angeles, shooting break-dancers against a greenscreen.

Matlosz brought the results of those tests to Michalek, who was impressed with the image quality but concerned about the difference in memory capabilities between the Phantom HD and the NAC camera. Because the project was about dancers' movement, Michalek wanted to be able to shoot as much of it as possible. At maximum resolution, the NAC offered as much as 10-15 seconds of recording time, whereas the Phantom HD topped out at 5 seconds (but offered larger bit depth).

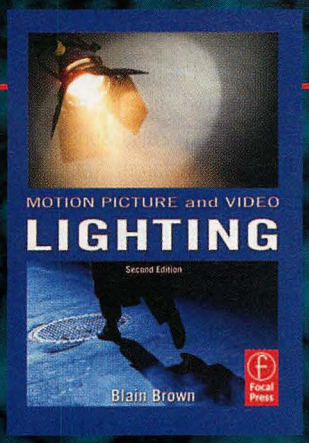
In November, during a pre-light day at William Wegman's studio in New York, the filmmakers tested the Red Lake MotionXtra, which offered 20 seconds of recording time at a 1504x1128 resolution. "We shot one test with the Red Lake technical reps on hand, and we rejected the camera then and there," says Matlosz. Michalek made an emergency call to Arri CSC and asked for the NAC camera. Matlosz and Michalek spent the better part of a Sunday sifting through the camera's software in preparation for the shoot on Monday morning.

The *Slow Dancing* shoot comprised four sessions that took place between November and March; each session lasted two to three days. On the first day of the November shoot, with the set lit and the dancers warmed up, it occurred to Matlosz that he could get the Vision Research camera and do his comparison test with the NAC on the set. The call was made, and in a matter of hours, a fully equipped Phantom HD was delivered to the set. For the rest of the day, one camera sat on top of the other, capturing the same lighting and angle.

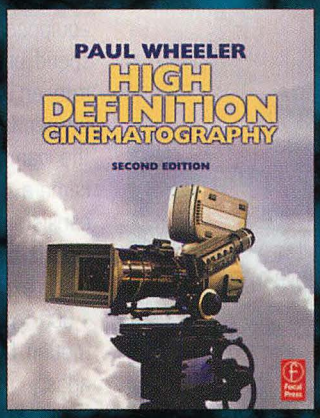
Once Michalek had a chance to review the footage with Dave Satin, the post supervisor at Mega Playground, he decided to shoot *Slow Dancing* with the Phantom. (Post on the project was ultimately carried out elsewhere.) All of the action was shot at a native 1,000 fps. Each action had to be short enough to fit into the 5-second window the Phantom offered. Image data is shot directly to 12GB of internal RAM, but the proprietary Vision Research RAW-type files must be downloaded to a hard disk in order to be processed for viewing. Because of the large amount of pixels being moved, it would take 8-20



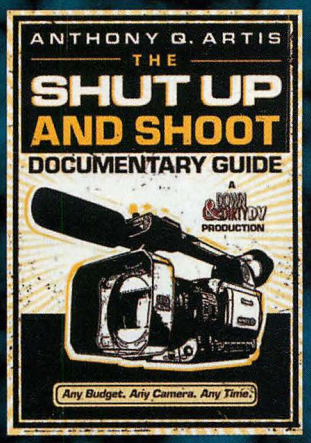
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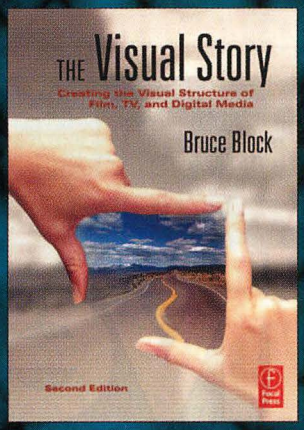
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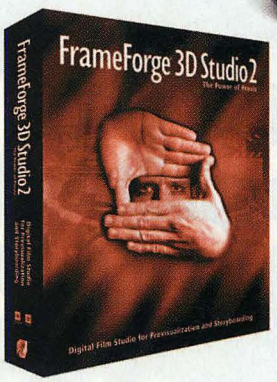
Storaro Covili: The Sign of a Destiny

The great figurative (and psychological) values that unite the two artists. About the meeting with painting and Gino Covili, sign of their common feeling of light, color, and image.

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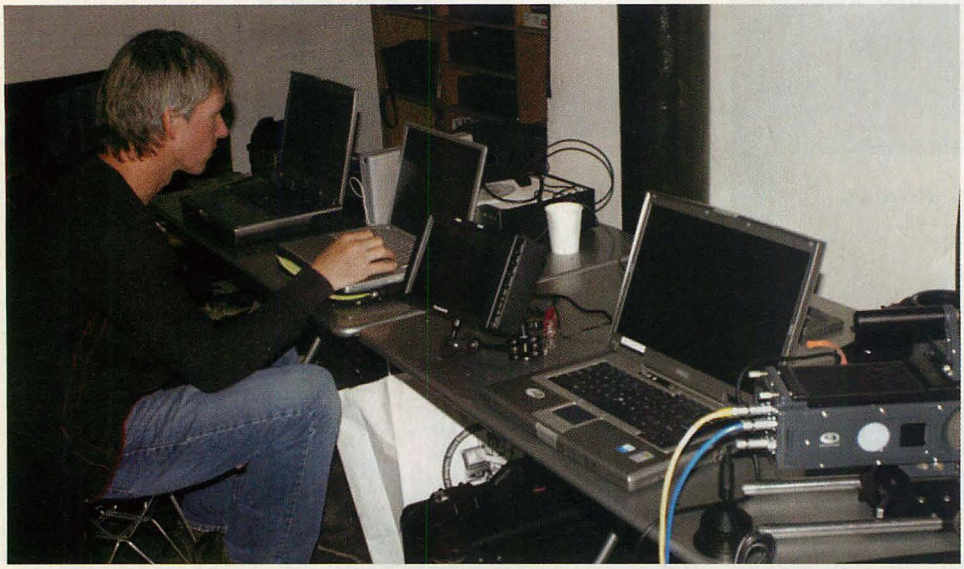
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Matlosz mans the Phantom HD interface.

minutes just to download the file from the camera. To save time, Matlosz and Michalek had to vet the full-speed action from a monitor before committing the image data to download.

"I'm pretty open to any technology that's out there, be it film or HD," says Matlosz. What doesn't change, he adds, is the way he approaches lighting. "I'm a huge fan of tungsten lights; it's the look I like. Once in awhile I'll use HMIs, but tungsten lamps are full-spectrum, whereas HMIs aren't. We were working with a fair number of people of color, and I felt tungsten would bring out the beauty of all the skin tones. HMIs kind of take all the beauty out of non-white skin; we've been seeing that in music videos for years."

Matlosz set the Phantom on its side for an elongated image and equipped it with a 35mm Zeiss Super-speed prime lens. At the target frame rate, an immense amount of light would be needed to register an exposure on the camera's sensor. Matlosz set the camera shutter to 180 degrees to keep it consistent with classic cinema, and the classic cinema shutter angle, resulting in an exposure of 1/2000 of a second at 1,000 fps. "It offers the slightest bit of motion blur, which I find tasteful," he adds.

Keying from the left and aiming for a T2.8 (the camera was rated at about 500 ASA), he stacked a pair of 20K lamps with heavy 1000H diffusion, knocking out 2 stops and giving the subject an intense, soft glow. Each dancer was backlit from the left and right sides by a Nine-light bank. For both lights, Matlosz and gaffer Bob Bushfield



started by turning each one up full and then turning off lamps "until it looked good." A thick diffusion was added to the left side, while a thinner one was added to the right. "That was something I wanted to experiment with — having one side be a bit hotter than the other," explains Matlosz. "Lighting in the simple three-point lighting style looks fine, but by lighting more from the gut I feel I can add more depth. On a project like this, where the talent wasn't moving through very much space, that was important."

A large bleached muslin was set up to the right of the camera to bounce all the light scatter and to bring up exposure in the shadows just enough to see the detail on the left side of the dancers' faces. 6K space lights dimmed to 4K added a little glow to the tops of the dancers' heads and provided some separation from the dark background. All in all, 70K of power was required.

Matlosz worked with two New York crewmembers, Bushfield and swing Jason Amos. When shooting started, Matlosz was acting as both director of photography and camera technician, an undesirable arrangement. "You end up not noticing things because you're worried about running the camera and the software and saving all of your files and such," he notes. Another swing, Greg Wilson, showed interest in the camera, so Matlosz volunteered to teach him how to run the software and the camera. "Greg is now working non-stop as a Phantom technician!" says the cinematographer. "It's a good feeling to pass on a little knowledge and help someone get work."

In the editing room, Michalek worked on the footage in Shake and Final Cut Studio to extend the frame rate from 1,000 fps to 3,000 fps and cropped the image down on the horizontal axis to 1440x1080. The final image is intended to be projected outdoors on three large screens at 24 fps. (Each presenter is responsible for the technical logistics of exhibition.)



Michalek (left) and Matlosz discuss a dancer's next move.

Slow Dancing premiered in July at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall and was screened in Los Angeles, at the Music Center Plaza, in September. As essential as he was to the project, Matlosz is content to let the kudos go to Michalek. "The most important thing to me is just staying creative," he says. "I don't want to make generic choices." ■

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Post Focus



In the ABC comedy *Pushing Daisies*, pie-shop owner Ned (Lee Pace, right), who can raise the dead with the slightest touch, and private investigator Emerson Cod (Chi McBride, center) team up to resurrect murder victims, find out who killed them and then collect a reward for bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Pushing Daisies Adds Pizzazz at LaserPacific

by Iain Stasukevich

ABC's new series *Pushing Daisies* is not your run-of-the-mill procedural crime drama. Series creators Bryan Fuller and Barry Sonnenfeld have put a supernatural spin on the genre, and the result plays like a vivid, storybook rendition of a Raymond Chandler novel.

Daisies tells the tale of Ned (Lee Pace), a pie-shop owner endowed with the unfortunate gift of bringing the dead back to life with the slightest touch. When Ned meets private investigator Emerson Cod (Chi McBride), the two develop a scheme to resurrect murder victims, find out who killed them, and collect a hefty reward for bringing the perpetrators to justice. Naturally, deadly consequences ensue.

In conveying its dreamlike qualities, *Daisies* relies on an extremely lush palette of electric blues, sunshine yellows, searing greens and warm, romantic skin tones that seem to emit their own light. Series cinematographer Michael Weaver had worked with Sonnenfeld (who began his own career as a highly regarded director of photography) on ABC's *Notes From the Underbelly,* and both felt the show's look would play a large part in its success.

Given four weeks to prep the pilot, Weaver, production designer Michael Wylie, and costumer Mary Vogt worked in concert to develop a meticulous color scheme, drawing heavily upon feature films for inspiration. Key influences included Sonnenfeld's *The Addams Family* (shot by Owen Roizman, ASC) and *Men in Black* (Don Peterman, ASC), as well as *Amélie* (Bruno Delbonnel, AFC) and *Big Fish* (Philippe Rousselot, ASC, AFC). "Barry was looking for this surreal color scheme, a palette that didn't exist in reality," says Weaver.

Reality sometimes intrudes on this strategy, however. While shooting an early flashback scene for the pilot, in which a young Ned runs down a sun-soaked hillside carpeted with daisies, the production encountered some particularly sour weather. Weaver approached post supervisor Livia Hanich, a fellow Sonnenfeld veteran, for a solution to the problem. "It was a critical scene, and we had to establish that vibrant look right off the bat," Weaver notes. "I wanted to know if some sort of digital intermediate would be an option, but the scene involved a lot of crane moves and other tricky elements, and we knew that a few Power Windows weren't going to cut it. We needed something with serious tracking capabilities."

Hanich was already working closely with LaserPacific in Hollywood to facilitate postproduction services for *Daisies,* so she arranged an Autodesk Lustre demo for Weaver and line producer Graham Place. Both immediately realized the possibilities offered by Lustre's tight but flexible control over their images, and the freedom it would afford them on the set.

Lustre is a software-based HD/2K/4K digital intermediate (DI) color-grading system that until recently had been "mostly evolving for the benefit of feature-film postproduction," says Leon Silverman, president of LaserPacific. "Part of what we're doing is trying to understand specifically how feature-film tools can fit into a television environment."

Silverman says Lustre's nonlinear workflow is a big plus when one is working within the temporal constraints of the television world. Given TV's abbreviated schedules, shows like *Pushing Daisies* may have only a fraction of the time and resources available to a feature film to achieve their postproduction goals, and a linear, telecine-based workflow often forces colorists to work one step at a time. By allowing the colorist to jump forward in a project, backtrack, or apply one setting to a group of shots, the Lustre offers a more flexible and efficient post process. With a powerful color-grading tool at its core, Lustre is also being touted as a "look creation" application, capable of unlimited custom digital mattes, key-frame tracking, and an arsenal of additional features normally reserved for visual-effects work.

For the scene of young Ned in the field of daisies, series colorist Joe Hathaway used multiple levels of custom, hand-drawn color-key mattes to turn Weaver's gray skies blue. Lustre's automatic tracking feature allowed Hathaway to go anywhere in the shot by

Pushing Daisies photos courtesy of Warner Bros.

assigning the matte geometry to key frames and letting the tracking software fill in the blanks. Mattes within mattes are also possible, and can be independently tracked or keyed.

After this early experience with the Lustre, Weaver decided to incorporate it as a cinematographic tool that would not only influence the quality of the 35mm images he captured on set, but also augment their content and composition. Throughout production, Weaver looked for new ways to use the Lustre to maintain a big-budget, feature-film look. When he found himself in a crunch on set, for example, he began using the program to circumvent grip work or substitute light sources. For one scene set in a morgue, Weaver made an early decision to trim the lights and shadows in post by adding snoots and flags on lights that didn't originally have them. During crucial scenes in Ned's bakery, The Pie Hole, unwanted countertop reflections were eliminated and shafts of light were painted in for dramatic effect.

Production designer Wylie even asked Hathaway to don some "digital overalls" and paint an entire wall a different color. "If they did it on set," notes Silverman, "it would've cost them $1,000 or $2,000, including labor, to paint those walls and then repaint them after the company left. Joe essentially repainted the walls by creating digital mattes for the part of the walls that needed to green, and then tracking those mattes and the holdout mattes for the actors while the camera moved."

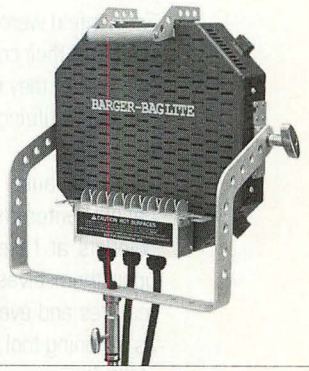
As Hathaway demonstrates the process, jogging through the scene and entering no more than a handful of key frames, Lustre follows the action, seamlessly extrapolating the points in between. It takes Hathaway about 10 minutes to paint the white wall green, and according to Silverman, this effect is accomplished at less than the practical cost.

The filmmakers have also employed Lustre in unexpected ways, dodging an image to add more shine to a villain's shoes or burning it to knock down the exposure of a building or

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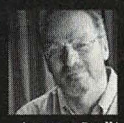

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Sleepless in Seattle, The Sting


John **Badham**/DIRECTOR
Saturday Night Fever, WarGames

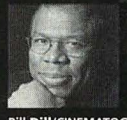
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window. Ultimately, Weaver and Sonnenfeld were so impressed with the results of their collaboration with LaserPacific that they made a commitment to continue utilizing Lustre for the run of the series.

Because Lustre is software-based, enterprising technicians and colorists at LaserPacific have taken it upon themselves to customize specific features and even add new ones, such as a cloning tool that Hathaway uses to skillfully erase unwanted elements within a shot (such as a distracting mile marker on the side of a road during Ned's childhood flashback).

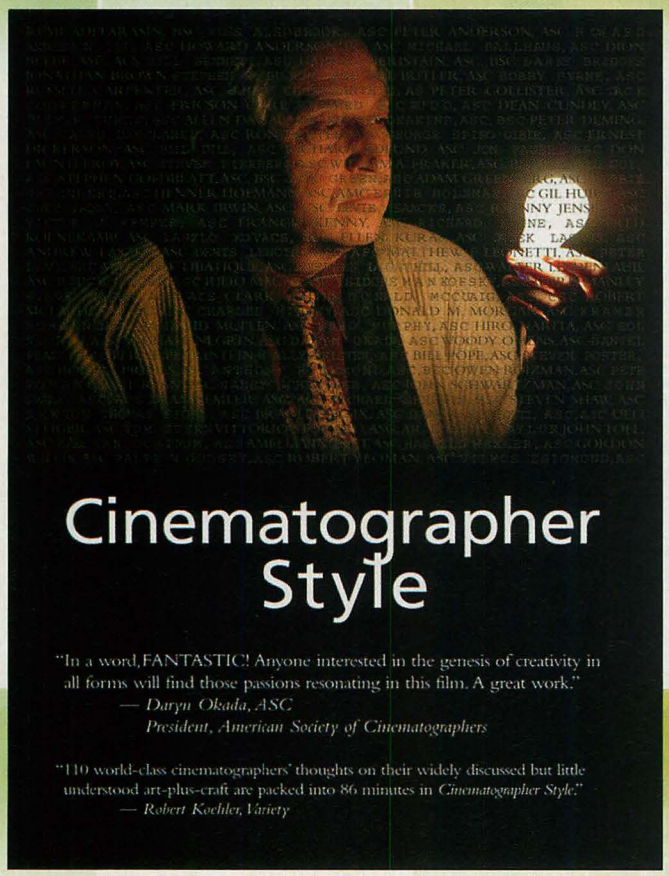
As studios warm up to the idea of investing in feature-film technology for television production, Silverman sees the Lustre playing a key role in LaserPacific's overall business strategy: to be the first company to introduce new and exciting postproduction toolsets to the TV arena. For all his enthusiasm about the Lustre's impressive capabilities, however, Silverman maintains a realistic view of the role it will play in the cinematographic process. "We understand that the Lustre is not a tool you use instead of cinematography," he states. "It's a tool to help reveal and illuminate the cinematographer's creative vision. There is no doubt that there are lots of tools available for color grading today. What's important is that we're adapting the existing workflow for television to take advantage of [tools] that have previously been the exclusive domain of digital intermediates."

Thomson Gathers Bones

Thomson has added Bones Dailies to its line of Grass Valley Bones data-capture and image-processing tools for feature-film production and digital-intermediate post. The software enables four time-consuming dailies processes to be performed in parallel by multiple artists on a storage area network (SAN).

"The idea behind Bones Dailies is that post houses can get more throughput out of their various suites, which today cannot be as efficient as they might be," says Jeff Rosica, senior vice president of broadcast and professional solutions for Grass Valley. "By enabling processes to happen faster than real time, and with a number of processes taking place in parallel, producers, directors and cinematographers, as well as post houses, will benefit from the improved workflow, which will allow them to save time and money while retaining tighter creative control over the entire color-correction and DI process."

At most postproduction houses, dailies are handled in a separate process. The film is scanned, logged and graded in a linear process, with transfer ratios of 1:4 or higher common. Thirty minutes of dailies will take several hours to capture and process. This is very inefficient, but more importantly, the grading decisions made at this stage are lost to postproduction — after the offline edit, selected takes need to be scanned again and the color correction restarted.



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The Bones Dailies software brings the dailies operation into the mainstream digital-intermediate workflow. Using a Grass Valley Spirit DataCine, film is scanned directly into the SAN at faster than real time. (24-fps movies can be transferred at 30 frames per second, a time savings of 20 percent.) When this speedy process is completed, the Spirit can be released for other work, and the original camera negative film can be securely archived. Once on the SAN, the images can be graded in a nonlinear fashion, saving time and providing more creative freedom. Batch processing allows multiple shots to receive the same grade much faster than real time. Because all Bones software applications can operate on the same platform, different processes — such as image ingest, audio ingest, synchronization, grading, dust-busting and scratch removal — can take place in parallel, again saving time.

Through the use of the Color Decision List (CDL) standard developed by the American Society of Cinematographers, color decisions made in Bones Dailies are retained in the system and used to form the basis of the final grade. A logarithmic scan of the film preserves its full dynamic range, giving complete creative control to the colorist working on the data. CDL color decisions are nondestructive: they are stored as metadata instructions to modify the files, so the full range of image detail is always available.

The price for a Bones Dailies system is $120,000, which includes the workstation but not the SAN. For information, visit www.thomsongrassvalley.com.

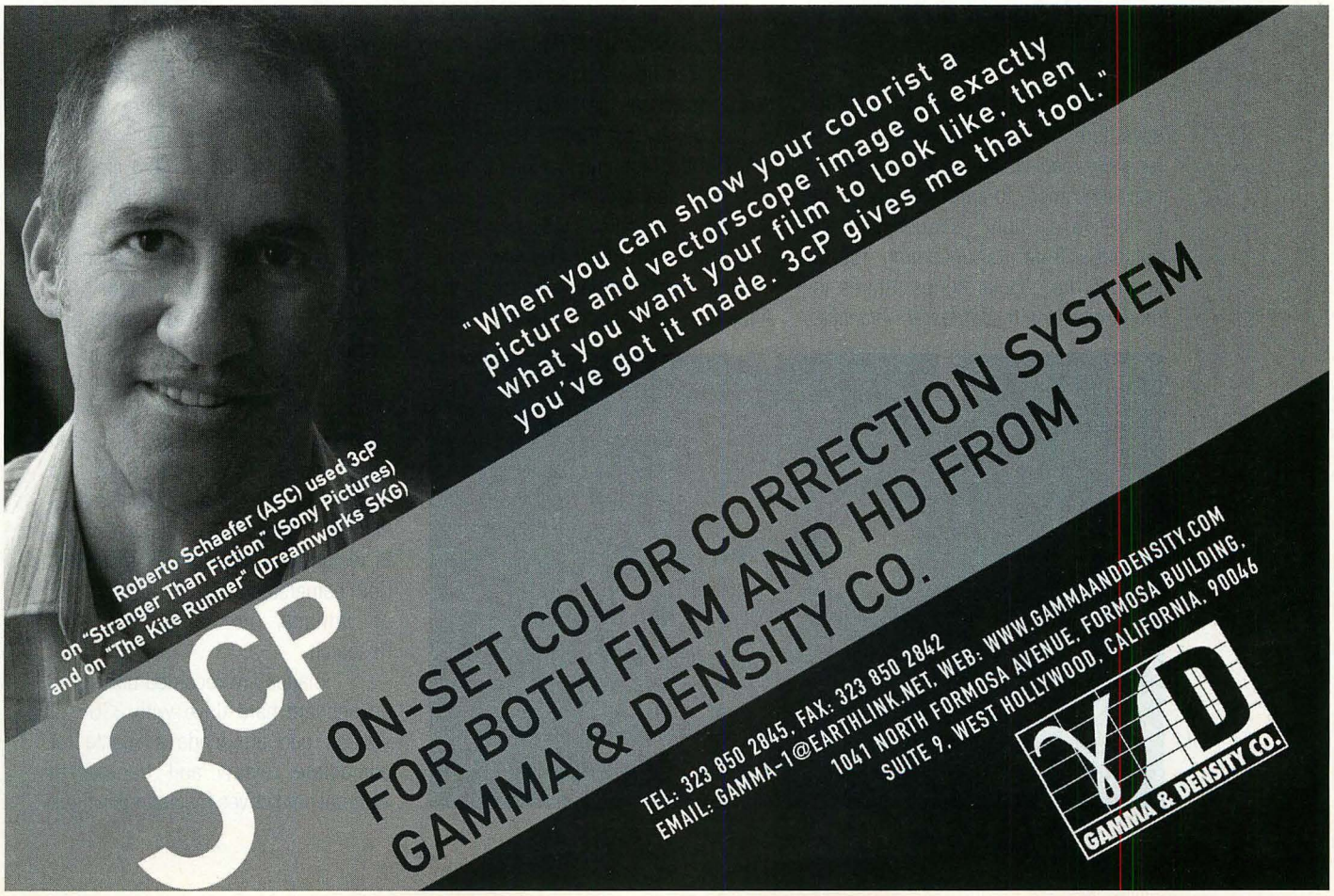
Digital Vision Opens Office in Hong Kong

Digital Vision recently opened an office in Hong Kong. As part of this expansion into the Asia Pacific region, the company appointed Peter Charles as director of sales.

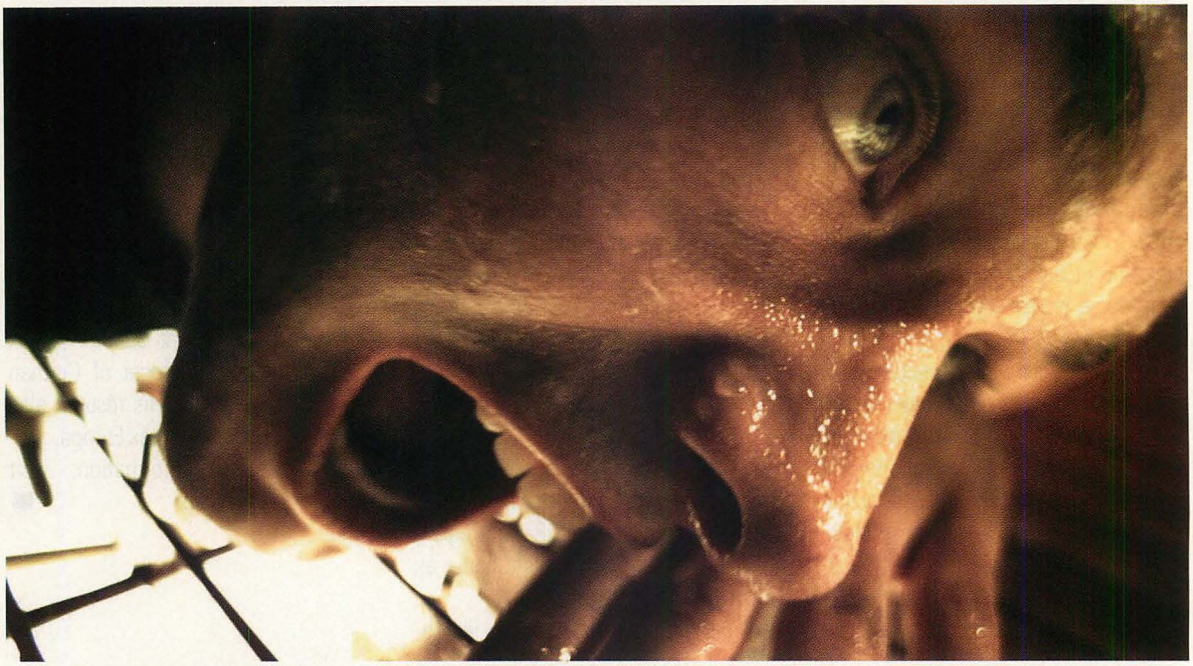
Digital Vision provides image-restoration, enhancement, color-correction and data-conforming systems that studios, television networks and post facilities use to produce and enhance feature films, TV programs and commercials. Its main branch was founded in 1988 and is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, with two wholly owned subsidiaries, Digital Vision U.S. in Los Angeles and Digital Vision U.K. in London. The Hong Kong office will allow Digital Vision to locally support its growing business in the region.

Charles joins the company from DVS, where he was head of sales and marketing for five years. Prior to his post at DVS, He worked at Quantel for six years as general manager of German sales and operations. His résumé also includes 11 years at Scitex Europe.

For more information: visit www.digitalvision.se. ■



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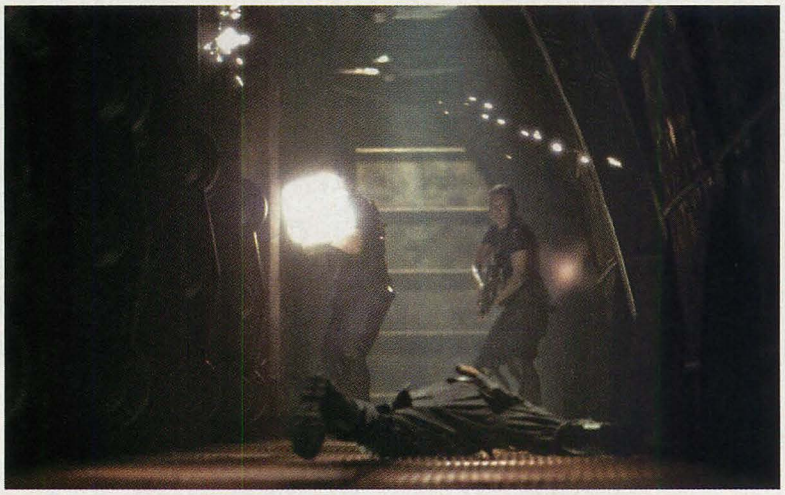


Cinematographer Stephen McNutt, CSC put the Phantom HD high-speed high-definition camera to work on the two-hour TV special *Battlestar Galactica: Razor*. Below: At a range of 250-300 fps on the Phantom HD, muzzle flashes persist and sparks float as Capt. Kara "Starbuck" Thrace and a marine open fire.

Galactica Goes High-Speed with Phantom HD

by Noah Kadner

The Sci-Fi Channel's action-adventure series *Battlestar Galactica* recently used Vision Research's Phantom HD camera to capture high-speed action and fight sequences for episodes from its upcoming fourth season. The popular series returns to the airwaves with *Battlestar Galactica: Razor*, a two-hour telefilm. Longtime series cinematographer Stephen McNutt, CSC chose the Phantom after seeing footage from the camera demonstrated at the NAB convention in Las Vegas last April. "I went [to NAB] for the first time in a long time to attend the feature-film Digital Cinema Summit," he recalls. "I was wandering around the show floor and saw some incredible slow-motion footage at the Abel Cine Tech booth. People didn't even know the Phantom was there."

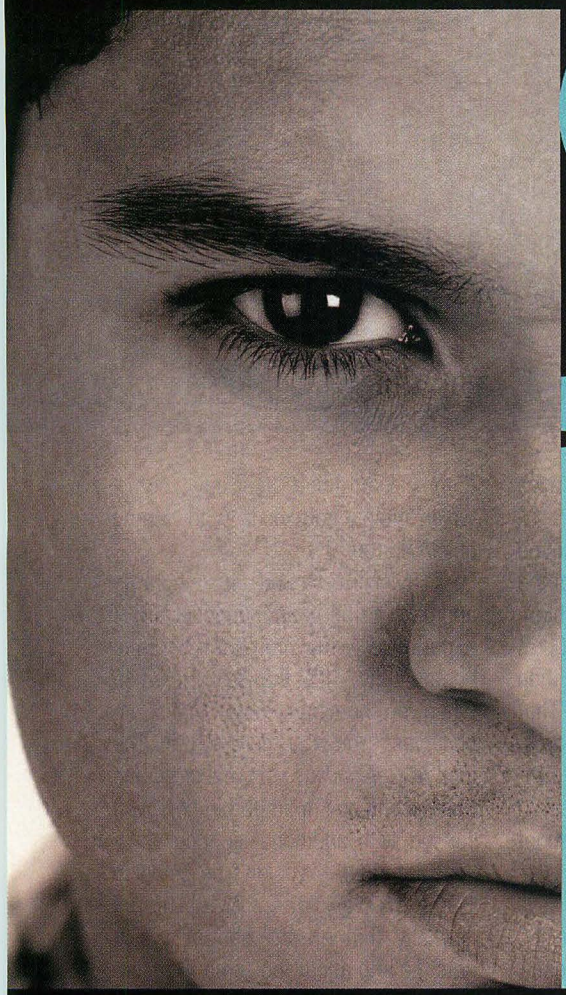


The Phantom shoots at up to high-definition (1920x1080) and 2K (2048x1536) resolutions at a maximum of 1,000 fps using PL-mount lenses. The camera measures 7.62"x 5.47"x12.13" (19.4x13.9x30.8 cm) and weighs in at 12.125 pounds (5.5 kg). It features a 2048x2047 active-pixel, Bayer-pattern CMOS image sensor at 42-bit color. Shutter speeds are adjustable up to 1/500,000 of a second and the ISO is rated at 600 ASA.

In addition to the Phantom HD, Vision offers the Phantom 65, which shoots up to 4,096x2440 at 125 fps and offers image resolution comparable to 65mm film. The Phantom 65 also uses PL-mount lenses and is nearly identical in weight and size to the HD model. Both cameras are capable of 11 stops of latitude, according to Vision Research.

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Above: Frames from Starbuck's gunplay. Below: A cloud of debris slowly envelops the father of Adm. Helena Cain, the commander of the Battlestar Pegasus.

Phantom also plans to offer CineMag external memory magazines with up to 512GB of additional storage, enabling longer runtimes and less downtime for offloading material. Footage is captured uncompressed using Vision's proprietary lossless Cine file format. The camera comes with Cine Viewer, a Windows utility that is used to transcode footage into image sequences for direct editing in nearly any NLE or finishing tool.

Galactica is normally shot with two Sony F900s recording at 1080/24p HDCam. "We haven't been doing a lot of slow motion," recalls McNutt. "Last season, we did a boxing episode where Lee (Jamie Bamber) and Adama (Edward James Olmos) were fighting at 120 fps. *Razor* has a lot of explosions and action sequences. We wanted to accent that at up to 250 fps and even 500 fps."

McNutt previously employed film cameras and frame doubling of the F900 footage in post to capture high-speed action. "We'd shoot the F900 at 60i, double the frames in post and then de-interlace them," he notes. "That brings the footage back to a progressive state, but you can get some artifacts. When I wanted to go above 120 fps, we'd bring in an Arri 435, shoot 35mm and transfer to D-5."

"The upside with digital," says 1st AC Chris Thompson, "is you can see the results right away. Traditionally, with film, you wait until the next day to get the negative reports. With HD you see it instantly, and you go again or you move on. We used Zeiss primes on the Phantom, up to 150mm and primarily 85mm. We didn't use any zooms, which mainly had to do with getting our T1.4 stop."

McNutt found his lighting approach to be nearly identical to his experience with high-speed 35mm photography. "It's the same as film when you shoot on a Photo-Sonics," he observes. "You pour more light in. The look of *Galactica* is very industrial and fluorescent, so I'm limited in how far I can go with additional lighting units. With interiors, I wouldn't be going to 1,000 fps very often. With film, I normally turn off the shutter, which gets me into about the same exposure range I had with the Phantom.

"We were shooting first at 120 fps, and we felt the motion wasn't quite slow enough," continues McNutt. "Then we shot at 500 fps and





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by Vittorio Storaro, ASC

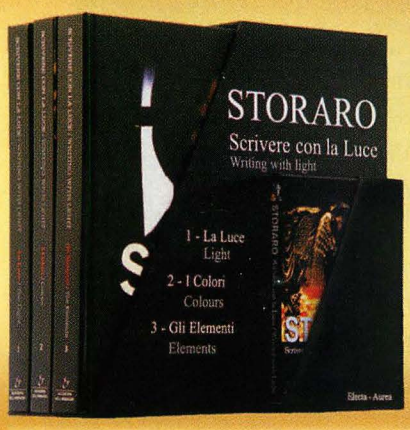
The trilogy book set and DVD *Storaro: Writing With Light* is the project of a lifetime: an encyclopedia by a single man — a visionary, a researcher and a scholar — about the mystery of vision. Each book explores Storaro's films and philosophies through a collection of writings, inspirational paintings, Storaro's own color photographs and black-and-white production stills documenting his work.

Each volume contains more than 400 pages, including color paintings, hundreds of Storaro's color photographs from the various films, and black-and-white production stills that document his work on the sets.

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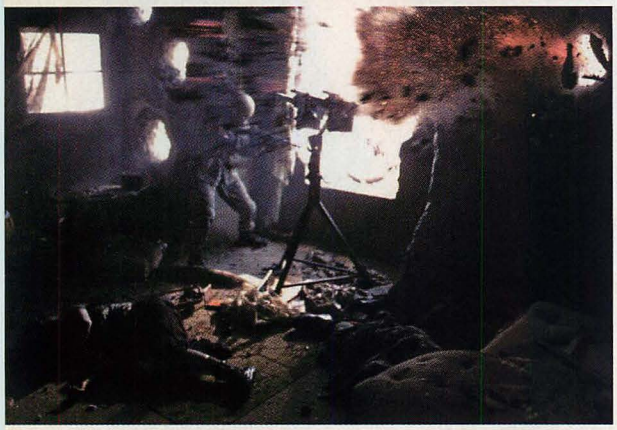
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that looked too slow. So we went back to a range of 250 to 300 fps. The Phantom was very effective, with beautiful images and quite remarkable latitude."

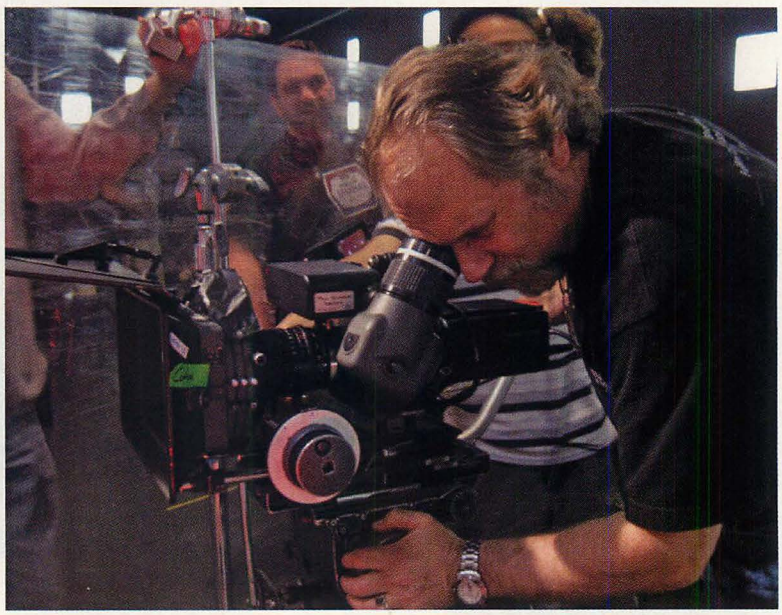
The Phantom uses circular buffer memory recording to capture high-speed events. "The interesting part is the triggering mechanism," McNutt remarks. "The hard drive is hooked into the camera, constantly sending information like a surveillance camera. All you have to do is push the trigger, and it saves from the moment you pushed it back to a predefined point in the past. At 1,000 fps at 32GB you have 4.5 seconds of running time. Then, when you're viewing, you can play it back in real time and pick your handles for transferring. Otherwise I could be downloading a lot of stuff I don't want."

As production was completed for *Razor*, the high-speed digital footage went through *Galactica's* post pipeline. Post supervisor Gregg Tilson at Universal Studios outlines the process: "They took the raw, uncompressed Cine files on hard drives to Northwest Imaging & FX in Vancouver [where the show is shot]. The Cine files were converted to 16-bit TIFF image stacks with Vision's Cine Viewer and laid back to D-5 in a Smoke bay. It's raw footage with no color correction applied other than a regulation 709 basic color matrix."

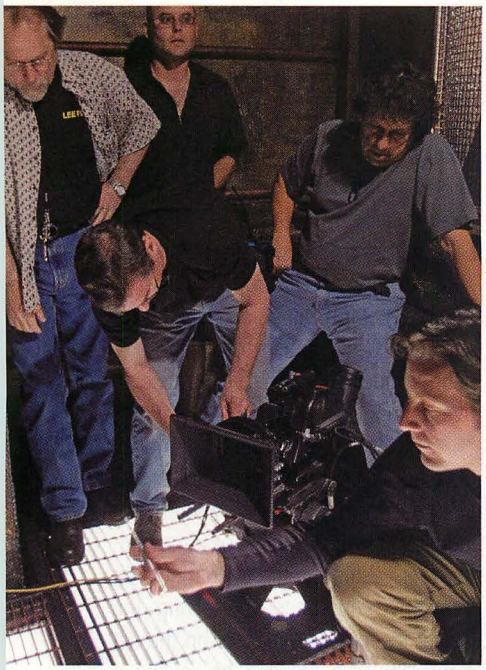
Once on D-5, the Phantom material was treated identically to HDCam-originated material from the F900s. The D-5 was down-converted to Beta SP and offlined on an Avid at Universal. "We cut from the Beta SP tapes in standard definition," notes Tilson. "When the offline edit is complete, we go to an Avid DS at Level 3 Post, our online house. They take the D-5 submasters in and we do an assembly master from our offline Avid bin.

"We have a day and half of color correction on a da Vinci 2K and output to HDCam at 1080/24p," Tilson continues. "Finally, we deliver two masters: a downconverted DigiBeta to Sci-Fi for broadcast in standard definition and the HDCam that airs later in high definition on Universal HD. The Phantom material looked great and definitely held up to the high-speed film footage we've done. Ultimately, the Phantom was easy to integrate into our workflow, once I learned that Northwest was going to do the Cine file conversions and send me a D-5."

"That was the big thing, the post workflow," says McNutt. "The Phantom fits ours really well. I'd love to have the camera on the truck all the time. It's a simple learning curve for



Above: A sequential series of frames from an explosive sequence shot at high speed. Right: McNutt frames a shot with the compact Phantom HD camera.



The crew prepares to shoot the low-angle, slow-motion sweat with the Phantom HD camera.

production. Our digital-imaging technician, Mike Sankey, learned the operational basics in about 8½ minutes." Although the high-speed footage shot for *Razor* was ultimately sped up to normal speed for the broadcast edit for creative reasons, McNutt used the Phantom again for additional episodes during the season.

Though the Phantom HD is relatively new to the production world, Vision Research has been in the camera business since 1950. It was originally known as the Photographic Analysis Company, a developer of ultra high-speed film cameras for military, automotive and industrial image analysis. The company shifted emphasis toward digital imaging and spun off Vision Research in the 1990s.

"Production is a broad market," observes Phil Jantzen, Vision Research's Cinema Project manager. "Each camera has certain feature sets and applications. We wanted to create an open-platform camera with the ability to modify and improve. If you need new features, we are more than willing to enable them if we can. With our military and automotive background, there's always some custom tooling. We tried to bring as much of the flexibility of our industrial cameras into the

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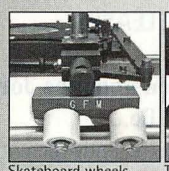
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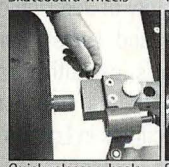
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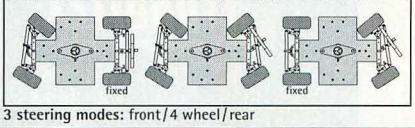

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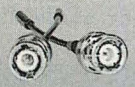
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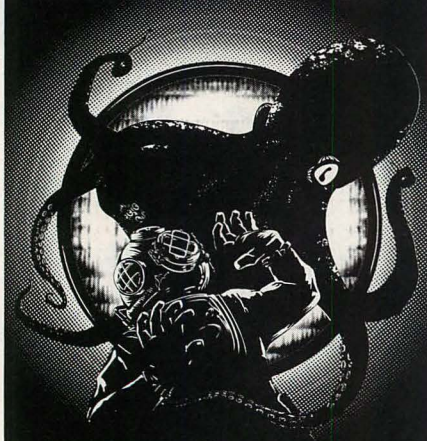


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production world as possible.

"We've built CMOS cameras for almost 15 years now and never bought an off-the-shelf sensor," Jantzen adds. "Algorithms designed for high-end digital still cameras help us compete with the three-chip cameras. The big, glaring difference is the ability to write at high speed, totally uncompressed, thanks to the Phantom's internal buffer and flash magazine. Phantom isn't limited by a recording format, other than the basic overhead inside the Cine file. You're shooting uncompressed at a high frame rate, which interfaces very well in a totally digital workflow."

Vision recently formed a distribution partnership with Abel Cine Tech to bring the Phantom HD and 65 into the professional broadcast and feature filmmaking market. "The world is going raw, uncompressed and IT-based, and we like to be on the cutting edge," says Mitch Gross, Abel Cine Tech's rental manager. "Phantom fits with our vision. It will initially be perceived as a niche, high-speed camera. As it evolves, it will come to be seen as a workhorse camera. That's Abel's history with products like the VariCam, MovieTube and Aaton."

"The Phantom is a whole different animal," says McNutt. "You get immediate playback at 500 fps and can judge everything — do we have to reset or can we move on? That's what the digital world offers us: the ability to make absolute decisions absolutely."

For more information, call Abel Cine Tech at (212) 462-0100 or visit www.abelcine.com.

PRESS RELEASES

Panavision Acquires Joe Dunton & Co.

Panavision recently purchased the camera inventory of Joe Dunton & Co. (JDC). Joe and Lester Dunton joined Panavision's executive ranks upon completion of the transaction. JDC has rental facilities in London and Wilmington, North Carolina.

"With the acquisition of these assets, Panavision will expand its inventory of high-end film cameras and lenses to support its growing worldwide business," says Bob Beitcher, president and CEO of Panavision, Inc. "It is another step forward in our strategy to acquire valuable assets on a selective basis and attract entrepreneurial industry leaders to our executive team."

Notes Joe Dunton, "I'm very pleased to be reuniting with Panavision, a company at the very top of our industry. It's an incredibly exciting platform for Lester and me to continue our innovative approach to solving the issues faced by filmmakers on the set every day. We couldn't be joining a better team!"

The purchase includes all film camera equipment owned by JDC, along with a wide assortment of spherical and anamorphic lenses and camera accessories. For more information, visit www.panavision.com.

Abel Cine and Zacuto Team Up

Abel Cine Tech and Zacuto USA have partnered to bring Zacuto's line of camera-rigging products to a wider market. Both companies specialize in the sales and rental of HD camera packages, with a focus on providing a high level of support to filmmakers. The Zacuto product line is rugged and highly versatile. Products can be combined in virtually endless combinations to suit the precise needs and preferences of each camera operator. All the components are designed to work interchangeably for quick assembly and custom configuration. A key feature of the Zacuto line is the Z-Release system, which offers quick-release functionality. Components can be assembled, locked securely in place and disassembled with the flip of a lever.

For more information, visit www.abelcine.com or www.zacuto.com.



More P2 Memory

Panasonic has introduced a 32GB P2 solid-state memory card for its line of P2 HD and P2 solid-state camcorders and decks. The 32GB P2 card, model AJ-P2C032RG, will have a suggested list price of $1,650. Camcorders equipped with the new 32GB P2 card will offer greater recording capacity than tape-based and disc-based systems, and will offer the benefits of no-moving-parts reliability and fast IT file-based workflow. With five 32GB P2 cards installed, the AJ-HPX3000 and HPX2000 P2 HD camcorders can record for up to 2.5 hours (over 3 hours in 24p) in AVC-Intra 100 or DVCPro HD and 5 hours (over 6.5 hours in 24p) in AVC-Intra 50 or DVCPro 50.

Panasonic's P2 card is based on reliable, solid-state memory, consisting of four SD cards, like those now used in digital still cameras, packaged in a rugged, die-cast frame that weighs 0.099 pounds (45g). This convenient card has four times the capacity and four times the transfer speed of a single SD card. The P2 card is resistant to impact (up to 1,500G), vibration (up to 15G), shock, dust and environmental extremes including temperature changes. It operates in temperatures from -4° to 176°F (-20 to 60°C), and can be stored in temperatures from -40° to 176°F (-40 to 80°C). Unlike tapes and discs, the P2 card has no rotating or contact parts. The solid-state P2 memory card can transfer data at speeds up to 640Mbps to provide the professional user with fast, easy oper-

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ation. Compared to tape or disc, P2 acquisition requires no media consumption, resulting in tremendous savings in media costs as well as environmental benefits.

The new 32GB card is fully compatible with the current 16GB P2 card, so users who've upgraded their P2 product(s) and computer systems for 16GB operation are ready for 32GB operation. P2 users who haven't completed this upgrade must do so in order to take advantage of 32GB operation.

For more information, visit www.panasonic.com/broadcast.

Panther T6 Alu Tripod

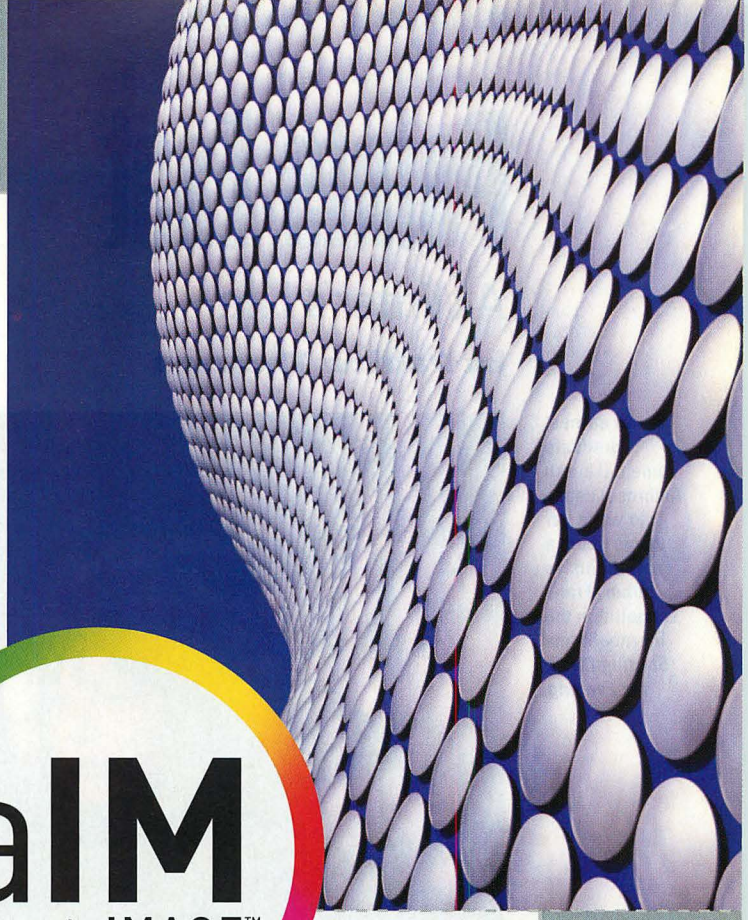


Panther has introduced the T6 Alu tripod system for DV and HDV camcorders. The T6 fluid head comes with a two-step drag control, vertical and horizontal brakes, and a sliding balance system with a quick-locking plate to center the camera. The T6 Alu (Code. no. ST6001), with rigid 75mm aluminum legs, also includes a ground spreader and a padded bag.

For more information, visit www. panther.us. ■

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Points East

A Writer's Life

by Patricia Thomson



An earnest graduate student (Lauren Ambrose) seeks to write her thesis about a semi-reclusive author (Frank Langella) in the literary drama *Starting Out in the Evening*.

A dynamic force in the indie-film world for a short time, Independent Digital Entertainment, known as InDigEnt, recently closed up shop. The final film made under its banner, *Starting Out in the Evening*, is as strong as any of the 16 that preceded it, but in many ways it's the least typical.

The New York-based InDigEnt was created in 1999 to support low-budget digital features. Projects were typically shot on DV camcorders, such as the Sony PD-150, and exhibited a raw, handheld aesthetic. Budgets were $250,000-$500,000, and shoots were limited to 18 days. *Starting Out in the Evening* breaks the mold in style and format. InDiGent wanted the production to use a Sony XDCam PDW camcorder, but director Andrew Wagner and cinematographer Harlan Bosmajian lobbied for 35mm. "We didn't win that argument," says Bosmajian with a laugh. Instead, the film was shot on high-definition (HD) video — a first for InDiGent — but this wasn't decided until three days before the shoot commenced. Production struck a last-minute deal with Voom HD Networks for supplementary financing and a Sony HDW-F900, and rented another F900 and Zeiss DigiPrimes from Abel Cine Tech.

In contrast to the look of most InDiGent productions, *Starting Out in the Evening* has a restrained sensibility. "We wanted to be very clean and elegant," Bosmajian offers. "We never wanted to feel the camera imposing an emotional quality onto the characters."

Based on a novel by Brian Morton, the story centers on Leonard Schiller (Frank Langella), a novelist in Manhattan whose time has passed. His books are out of print, and his latest manuscript remains unfinished after 10 years. Into his ordered, solitary life walks a bold graduate student, Heather (Lauren Ambrose), who intends to write her thesis about him. Initially resistant, Schiller gradually relents, at first because of the prospect of rekindled interest in his writing, and then, as Heather pushes personal boundaries, because of reawakened emotions. Schiller's other key relationship is with his daughter (Lili Taylor), who is engaged in her own struggle for love and has to analyze her priorities when her ex-beau (Adrian Lester) reappears.

"Our guiding creative principle

Photos by Annabel Clark, courtesy of Roadside Attractions.

was to treat transformation as a subtle shift of emotion, a gradual opening of the mind," says Wagner. "Schiller and company work this out in living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms — intimate spaces that acted as agents of change. That was the landscape we had to work with."

One of the key challenges was carving out a calm, quiet space for the actors within the chaos engendered by an 18-day shoot. Wagner picked Bosmajian because the cinematographer had worked in "the tight crawlspace" of that schedule before, on InDiGent's *Kill the Poor*, directed by Alan Taylor. What's more, Bosmajian had shot more than two dozen movies in the $1 million–$5 million range, many of them in New York. In the end, the cinematographer proved wholly adept at reconciling lack of time and aesthetic control. "Harlan's great achievement on this project was attaining beauty and creative truth under duress," says Wagner.

In plotting the visual design, the director believed "the key to this story about emotional complexity was visual simplicity. This meant telling the story through the actors' eyes and behavior. Our important choices were frame size and movement — whether to anchor a scene to their faces or their body language and spatial relationships."

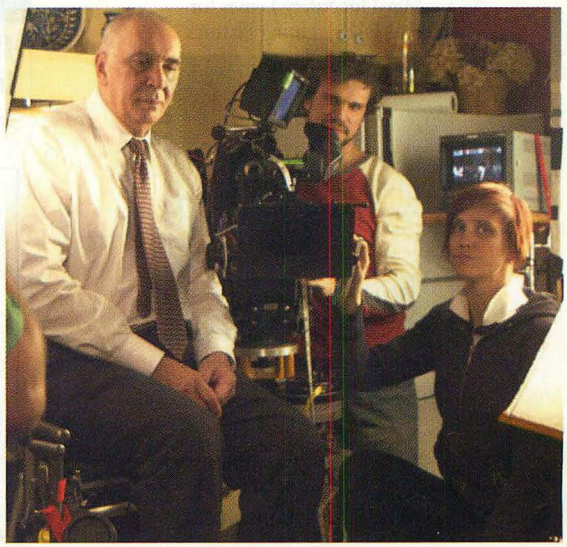
Wagner wanted simplicity but not dullness, so he asked Bosmajian to imbue the film with a "quiet kineticism, so that every frame was alive." Eschewing handheld camerawork except for one scene — a party where Schiller feels off-kilter — Bosmajian worked mostly with a Fisher 10 dolly. He favored diagonal compositions in an effort to avoid flatness. "You have to do this with HD in general," he notes. "Whenever I compose images, I try to get that sense of foreground, middle ground, and background through lighting and composition to draw the viewer into the image.

Bosmajian's key crew included gaffer Steve Calitri and camera operator Manuel Billeter, who had collaborated with him on four and 12 movies, respectively. "I trust them completely, so I could devote my energy to working with the director," he says. Calitri and Bosmajian devised a lighting scheme that facilitated speed and flexibility. In key locations like Schiller's apartment, where they shot for a week, they pre-lit with what they dubbed a "ring of fire" — an array of Inkies, Tweenies, 1Ks and Dedolights mounted on one or two wall-spreaders. "Sometimes we wouldn't even know what we were going to be lighting," says the cinematographer. "Once we did the blocking, we'd figure it out; the back lights and the lights lighting the set were already up. Then we'd just set the key light from the floor, and maybe add a bit of fill."

Framing followed guidelines that underscored the characters' relationships. The intellectual exchanges between novelist and student were frequently two-shots, except when they were navigating a way to close the gap between them. By contrast, scenes with Schiller and his daughter, Ariel, or Ariel and her old boyfriend — characters with deep connections — were long masters. These shots sometimes contained complicated movement. For example, a 2½-page scene with Schiller and his daughter in a bookstore was done in one shot. "That's one of my favorite shots," says Bosmajian. "We were inspired by the bookstore scene in *Hannah and Her Sisters*. The idea of letting characters go offscreen, say a couple of lines, then come back in again was something we got from that film. It would have been easy to pop in for a close-up and cut two of those master shots together, but Andrew didn't want to do that. He didn't want to break that rhythm."

Bosmajian augmented the location's existing lighting with a few Kino Flos. Then the blocking had to be worked out. Because the production couldn't afford a separate monitor for the dolly grip, he had to intuit when the characters were in the right spot. By take 10, their time in the bookstore was up, but Wagner wasn't satisfied. Bosmajian recalls, "The producers were telling us to get out of there, but Andrew insisted on staying till we got the shot. Three takes later we got it. We wouldn't have got it had he not pushed like that. For me, that scene epitomized the shoot." ■

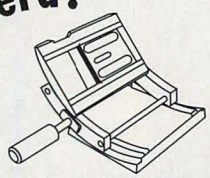




Left: The writer's emotional reawakening impacts his relationship with his daughter (Lili Taylor) in unexpected ways. Below: Langella awaits his cue as cinematographer Harlan Bosmajian (at camera) and 1st AC Linda Slater line up a shot.

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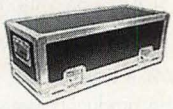


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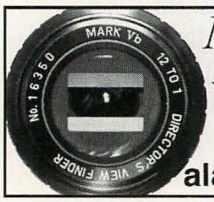
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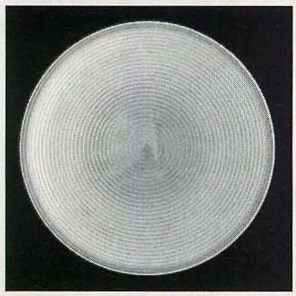


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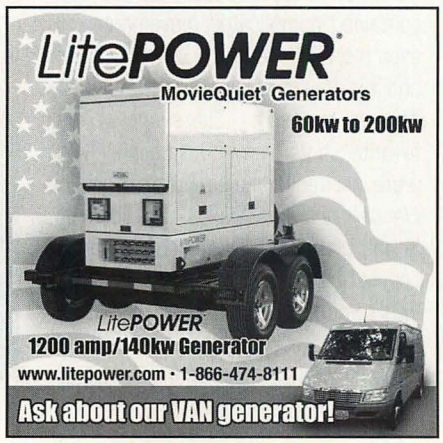
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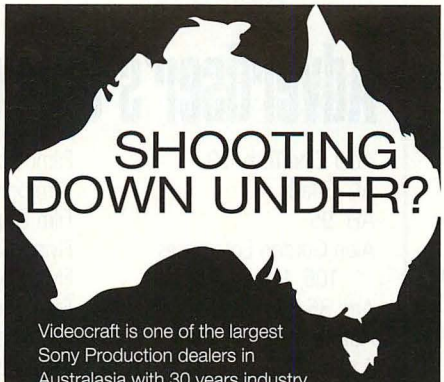


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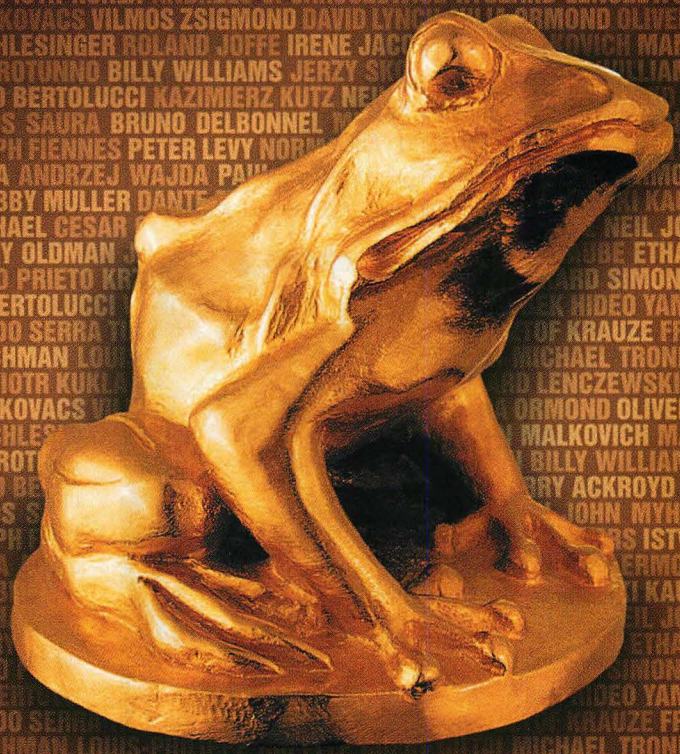
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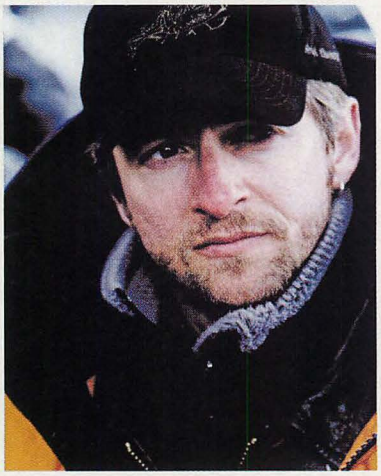
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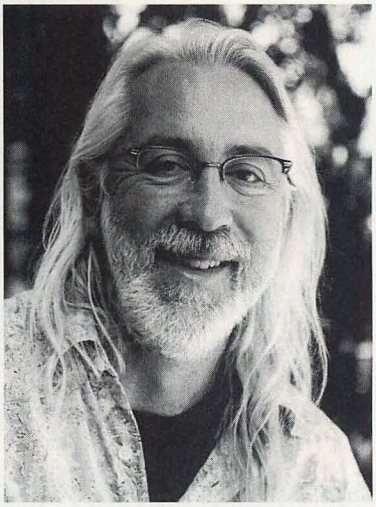
New Members

The Society recently welcomed two new active members to its ranks, Adam Kane and Rodney Taylor.

A native of Burbank, California, and the son of industry veterans Artie and Sara Kane (a composer and a studio singer, respectively), **Adam Kane, ASC** got his start in the business at age 14 assisting the staff cameraman at a grassroots television station in Aspen, Colorado. After high school, he refined his passion for cinematography under the tutelage of Hungarian cinematographer Beda Batka at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. After shooting nine films as an undergraduate, Kane next sought his master's degree from the American Film Institute. With that degree in hand, he began building his résumé, shooting commercials, infomercials, independent features, low-budget television, and video news with the Associated Press.

Since the late 1990s, Kane has shot a number of features (including *The Boondock Saints*, *Love and Sex*, *The Man*, *Skinwalkers*, and *Resurrecting the Champ*) and television pilots (including *Heroes*, which earned an ASC Award nomination). His TV credits include *The West Wing*, *Hack* and *Grey's Anatomy*.

After discovering his passion for cinematography while attending the University of North Carolina, **Rodney Taylor, ASC** began shooting live sports for ESPN, ABC and TBS. In 1987, he photographed his first feature-length documentary, and the next year he relocated to Los Angeles, where he worked as an assistant before moving into the role of director of photography in the mid-1990s.



In addition to his narrative feature credits (including *Sparkler*, *Morning* and *Riders*), Taylor has put together an impressive body of work in the Imax format, an accomplishment that earned him a Kodak Vision Award in 2003. Some of his Imax credits include *Ride Around the World*, *Wired to Win*, *The Legend of Loch Lomond*, *Michael Jordan to the Max* and *Alaska: Spirit of the Wild*.

Most recently, he photographed *Home of the Giants* for director Rusty Gorman and *Save Me* for director Rob Cary.

Heritage Award Dedicated to Kovacs' Memory

The 2008 ASC Heritage Award, which will be presented to one or more recipients during the 22nd Annual ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards on Jan. 26, will be named for **Laszlo Kovacs, ASC**, who died on July 22. "Laszlo envisioned the Heritage Award as a tangible way for us to inspire talented, young cinematography students to pursue their dreams," says ASC President Daryn Okada. "It was his idea to dedicate the Heritage Award to the memory of a different ASC member each year."

So Well Remembered

Alex Thomson, BSC, who in 2002 was fêted with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the British Society of Cinematographers and also served as the editor of the BSC's newsletter, died in June at the age of 78.

After finishing his National Service in the Royal Corps of Signals, Thomson was determined to get into the film business, and his first break was indeed a fortuitous one; finding employment at Denham Studios, he was made clapper boy on the feature *So Well Remembered*, photographed by Freddie Young, BSC. After Denham, Thomson put in a few years with Technicolor, where he worked on such films as Laurence Olivier's *Richard III* and John Huston's *Moulin Rouge*, and then moved on to Pinewood Studios before setting off as a freelance focus puller and, later, an operator.

Thomson's career as a director of photography got off to a rollicking good start with his first feature credit, *Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush*. Later work included *Legend* and *Hamlet*, both of which earned BSC Awards, and *Excalibur*, for which he earned an Academy Award nomination. He once said he was most proud of his work on Michael Cimino's *The Sicilian*.

Thomson is survived by his wife, Diana Golding, and daughter, Chyna Thomson, who worked frequently with him as a camera assistant and operator.

— Jon D. Witmer

■

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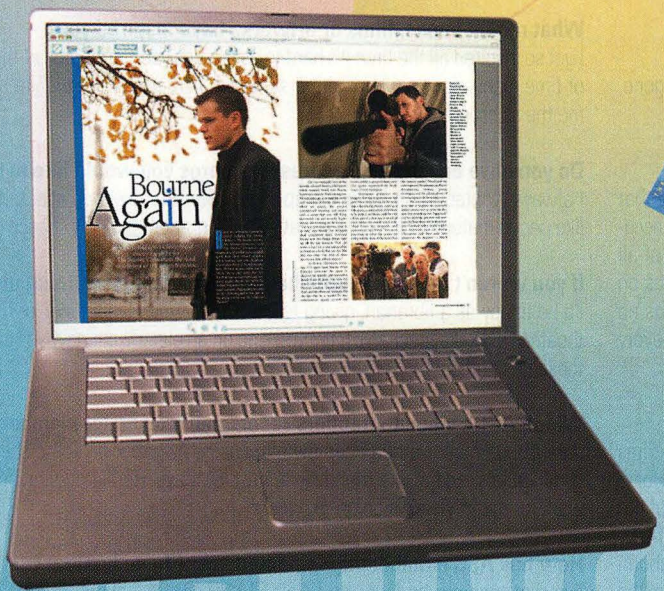


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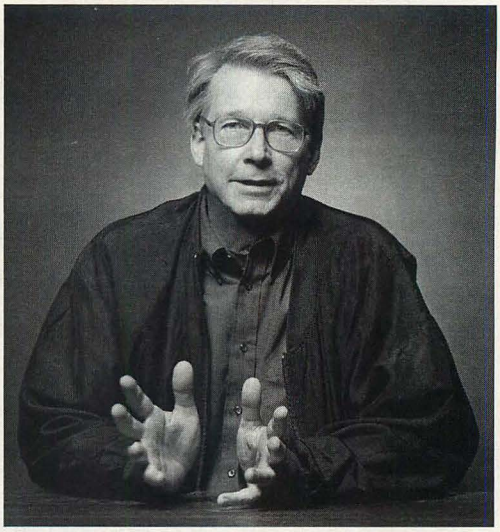
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ASC CLOSE-UP

John Hora, ASC



When you were a child, what film made the strongest impression on you?
Bambi, because his mother dies. I'm still dealing with it. I was also fascinated by films with elements of fantasy, science and adventure that took place in remote or fanciful worlds: *The Day The Earth Stood Still, The Thing From Another World, The Ghost and Mrs. Muir, When Worlds Collide* and *War of the Worlds.*

Which cinematographers, past or present, do you most admire?
The great black-and-white guys, like [ASC members] Gregg Toland, James Wong Howe, Stanley Cortez and Arthur Miller, were all unbelievably good. Back then, the style of a studio, a producer, a composer or cinematographer could be identified without reading the credits. One person I consider to be among the greatest artists in the history of film, not only as a photographer and cinematographer but also as director, editor, dancer and actress, is Leni Riefenstahl. In my opinion, she's right up there with Orson Welles.

In terms of color cinematography, anybody associated with *Gone With the Wind* and William Cameron Menzies. Jack Cardiff, BSC was the first cinematographer I came to recognize by name and whose work I sought out. Leon Shamroy, ASC's color work from *Leave Her to Heaven* right up to *Cleopatra* is luscious, with the possible exception of *South Pacific.* I saw Haskell Wexler, ASC's early effort *Stake Out on Dope Street* and followed his and Irvin Kershner's work from then on.

What sparked your interest in photography?
It's genetic. My father was an advanced amateur still photographer who attended Art Center School of Design. My maternal grandfather had his own photo studio in Missouri; he had acquired it from his father, a contemporary of Mathew Brady. I grew up in a house of cameras, film, darkrooms, tintypes, old glass plates, photography books and magazines, and lots of music, too.

Where did you study and/or train?
The University of Southern California. That's where Irvin Kershner had gone, and it was close to home.

Who were your early teachers or mentors?
None of my teachers at USC had worked in "Hollywood." We were told that no USC graduate had worked even one day for the studios, and that was accurate. Dick Kendal was my photography instructor. He had full command of all things technical and was a friend of Jimmy Wong Howe, who visited us on occasion. One of the best things about USC was seeing films; there was no home video at that time, so seeing films from every genre and country every night was unusual, wonderful and important.

What are some of your key artistic influences?
My folks certainly instilled me with intellectual curiosity. I saw American films every weekend at the theaters in Pasadena, immersing myself in the Hollywood product. Then I met Dennis Jakob, who introduced me to the rest of the world — the Russian cinema of Eisenstein, and French and European films. We saw *Battleship Potemkin* together at the Cornet Theater, and I was reborn. Dennis went on to UCLA and later worked with Francis Ford Coppola. Also, the documentaries of Pare Lorenz and others of the period are rhapsodic.

How did you get your first break in the business?
My mother demanded that I get a paying job, and a friend whose father was in advertising directed me to John Urie and Associates, a commercial-production company. I was hired on the basis of the experimental abstract films I had made with Jakob. I shot 'experimental projects' for Urie and also worked as 1st AC for Ed Martin, another mentor.

What has been your most satisfying moment on a project?
This will sound a little strange, but the most magical thing is attend the scoring session when the film is first seen with the music composed for it. That's when I know it's really going to make it as a movie. I've attended every session I could since my first feature, *Big Mo*, in 1973.

Have you made any memorable blunders?
Several, but the biggest was turning down the original *Terminator.* It was a non-union show, and I had just joined the local after finishing *The Howling,* so I felt I had to let it go.

What's the best professional advice you've ever received?
'It's only a film,' which, coupled with 'This too will pass,' pretty much takes care of it.

What recent books, films or artworks have inspired you?
I get so inspired all the time it's hard to say. In between, I get mad at the length of time many movies take to get a story out, particularly in the third act. Give me the scissors!

Do you have any favorite genres, or genres you would like to try?
I always wanted to do historical epics like *Ben Hur, Ivanhoe* and *The Robe.* I like period material. *Liar's Moon*, set in 1949, is about the only chance I've had.

If you weren't a cinematographer, what might you be doing instead?
I'd be happy as a librarian, giving tours of Hollywood landmarks, or running a theater. I also like mechanics. I'm working on an electric car now so I can avoid those gas pumps!

Which ASC cinematographers recommended you for membership?
Jack Cooperman. He had been my first choice as gaffer on some challenging commercials, and also a friend since my USC days. He did outstanding aerial work for me in VistaVision on *Explorers.*

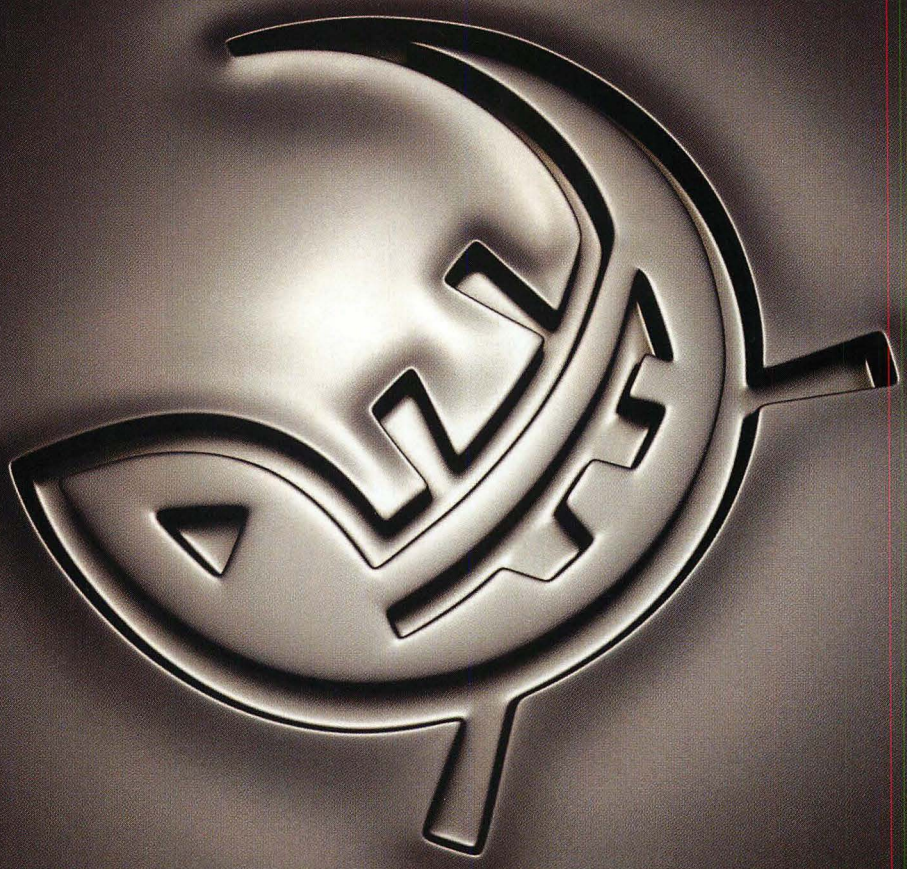
How has ASC membership impacted your life and career?
I've met others who love the Eclair CM-3 camera. This is the camera that Welles and Coppola chose, and you should have one, too! ■

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ONFILM

MANDY WALKER, ACS



"My mother began taking me to art galleries when I was a child. She had a big influence on my interest in art. I took black-and-white photos and made prints in my own darkroom when I was a teenager. I also loved foreign films. They affected how I saw the world. I knew I wanted to be a cinematographer when I was 13 or 14 years old. I decided that I was going to learn by being on crews, watching other people work, and then shooting my own films. At some point, I realized that filmmaking is a universal art form just like the paintings that I saw in galleries. Cinematographers have to understand and master technology, but they also need the instincts of an artist. You have to get inside the mind of the director, understand his or her vision, and interpret it as composition, light, atmosphere, mood, and emotions. I think it is really important for people to see films and stories from around the world. I believe they can affect how we feel on an emotional level about people and issues."

Mandy Walker, ACS was born in Melbourne, Australia. She began her career shooting documentaries, music videos, commercials and short dramatic films, including the award-winning *Parklands* in 1996. Her subsequent feature credits include *Love Serenade*, *The Well*, *Walk the Talk*, *Lantana*, *Australian Rules*, *Shattered Glass* and the upcoming release of *Australia*.

[All these films were shot on Kodak motion picture film.]

For an extended interview with Mandy Walker, ACS, visit www.kodak.com/go/onfilm.

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